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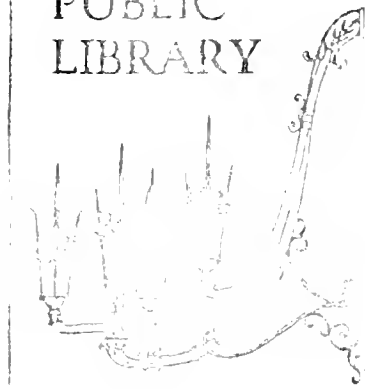
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COMMERCIAL PALACE

DISTRICT

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CITY OF BOSTON Kevin H. White, Mayor

BOSTON LANDMARKS COMMISSION BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

COMMERCIAL PALACE DISTRICT

Prepared by the Staff of:

Boston Landmarks Commission

Boston Redevelopment Authority

July, 1983



CITY OF BOSTON
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY HALL, BOSTON

KEVIN H WHITE
MAYOR

Boston is a city where past and future are closely intertwined. Our downtown retail district - vital, dynamic and growing - encompasses a district of Victorian-era buildings constructed after the Great Fire of 1872. It is important that Boston, through careful planning, devise a process for protecting the distinctive structures of this Commercial Palace District. At the same time, Boston must encourage the new investment and new development which brings economic benefits and new jobs to our residents.

Thus, this report, a joint effort of the Boston Landmarks Commission and the Boston Redevelopment Authority, sets forth a set of public policies and actions which can maintain and enhance the historic character of our downtown. I think it also shows that these agencies, working together, and consulting with the downtown business community, can find that balance between old and new which truly reflects the spirit of this city.

Kevin H. White, Mayor
City of Boston

COMMERCIAL PALACE DISTRICT

Executive Summary

Introduction

This report on the Commercial Palace District has been undertaken jointly by the Boston Landmarks Commission and the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

The area examined in this study extends generally from Hawley Street to Devonshire Street on either side of Summer Street, and from Bedford to Franklin Streets.

The primary purposes of this joint undertaking were:

1. to identify the outstanding urban design and preservation planning issues and develop policies which address these issues; and
2. to identify, evaluate and recommend the best mechanisms for implementing these policies.

The Commercial Palace District

This area is the largest surviving portion of Boston's late 19th century commercial district. Devastated during the Great Fire of 1872, the area was rebuilt quickly to serve the dry goods and clothing industries which dominated Boston's economy during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Reflecting Boston's wealth and confidence in this period, the area is characterized by masonry buildings with a consistent cornice height and richly articulated facades.

Two different trends have been taking place within the Commercial Palace District. On one hand, several buildings have been or are being rehabilitated

in the district. On the other hand, several notable buildings have been demolished and replaced with buildings of inappropriate scale and character, such as the Blue Cross - Blue Shield Building.

This report is an attempt to provide a framework to accommodate future development compatible with the existing character of the District.

Recommended Policies

The following policies are recommended to address issues identified in the Commercial Palace District;

- Within the district, emphasis will be on preservation of existing buildings and historic character
- Major new development will be allowed only at the perimeter of the district
- Rehabilitation of existing buildings will be reviewed according to the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation
- Guidelines for new development within the District will require that new construction is compatible with and reinforces the character of the district.

Recommended Public Actions

1. Listing of Commercial Palace District in the National Register of Historic Places.

The area bounded by Chauncy, Hawley, Hawley Place, Devonshire, South, Lincoln and Bedford Streets should be listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission should be encouraged to nominate, upon the recommendation of the Boston Landmarks Commission and the Boston Redevelopment Authority, this area to the Secretary of the Interior. The primary impact of National Register listing lies in the economic incentives available to owners for historic preservation. These incentives include Investment Tax Credits for rehabilitation expenditures and tax savings through the charitable gifts of preservation easements.

2. Secure CARD Designation for Commercial Palace District.

The Boston Redevelopment Authority should prepare a Commercial Area Revitalization District (CARD) plan for the area. The boundaries of the CARD district should be coincidental with those of the National Register district. A CARD program would allow the following economic development incentives to be applied to commercial and mixed-use projects within the area:

- financing at interest rates several points below conventional rates through tax-exempt Industrial Revenue Bonds;
- mortgage insurance;
- a credit against a corporation's state excise tax liability and a 25 percent payroll deduction through the Urban Job Incentive Program.

Design review of projects seeking CARD financing would be carried out by the Boston Redevelopment Authority in conjunction with the Boston Landmarks Commission according to guidelines recommended in Section V of this report.

3. Boston Landmarks Commission Designations.

Approximately 26 buildings within the Commercial Palace District contribute in various ways to the overall character of the area. Of these, it is recommended that five structures be evaluated by the Commission staff for possible Landmark designation. The Kennedy Building is currently being considered for Landmark designation by the Boston Landmarks Commission. Additionally, the following should be evaluated:

- Bedford Building, 89-105 Bedford Street;
- Wigglesworth Building, 89-93 Franklin Street;
- Record American Building (Beebe - Weld), 1 Winthrop Square;
- Long's Jewelry, 40-46 Summer Street; and
- Proctor Building, 100-106 Bedford Street.

4. Preservation Easements

Although no easement donations utilizing the charitable gift deduction are known to have been made in Boston, there has been considerable interest in this provision in other cities despite the fact that the proposed IRS regulations on this subject have yet to be released.

To qualify, the buildings concerned must be listed on the National Register individually or certified as contributing to a National Register District before the taxpayer files a return claiming a charitable gift deduction.

Historic Boston, Incorporated and the Boston Landmarks Commission are currently exploring the feasibility of establishing a preservation easement program in Boston.

5. Public Information Program Implementation.

It is recommended that the Boston Redevelopment Authority and the Landmarks Commission undertake jointly a public information program for the Commercial Palace District. The purpose of this would be to inform property owners of the provisions for an area listed in the National Register of Historic Places, Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credits, and tax advantages associated with voluntary donation of preservation easements. In addition, property owners would be informed of the provisions of a CARD designation, and procedures for pursuing projects within a CARD area. Finally, the public information program would serve as a guide for private rehabilitation and new development efforts through the dissemination of overall design guidelines for the Commercial Palace District.

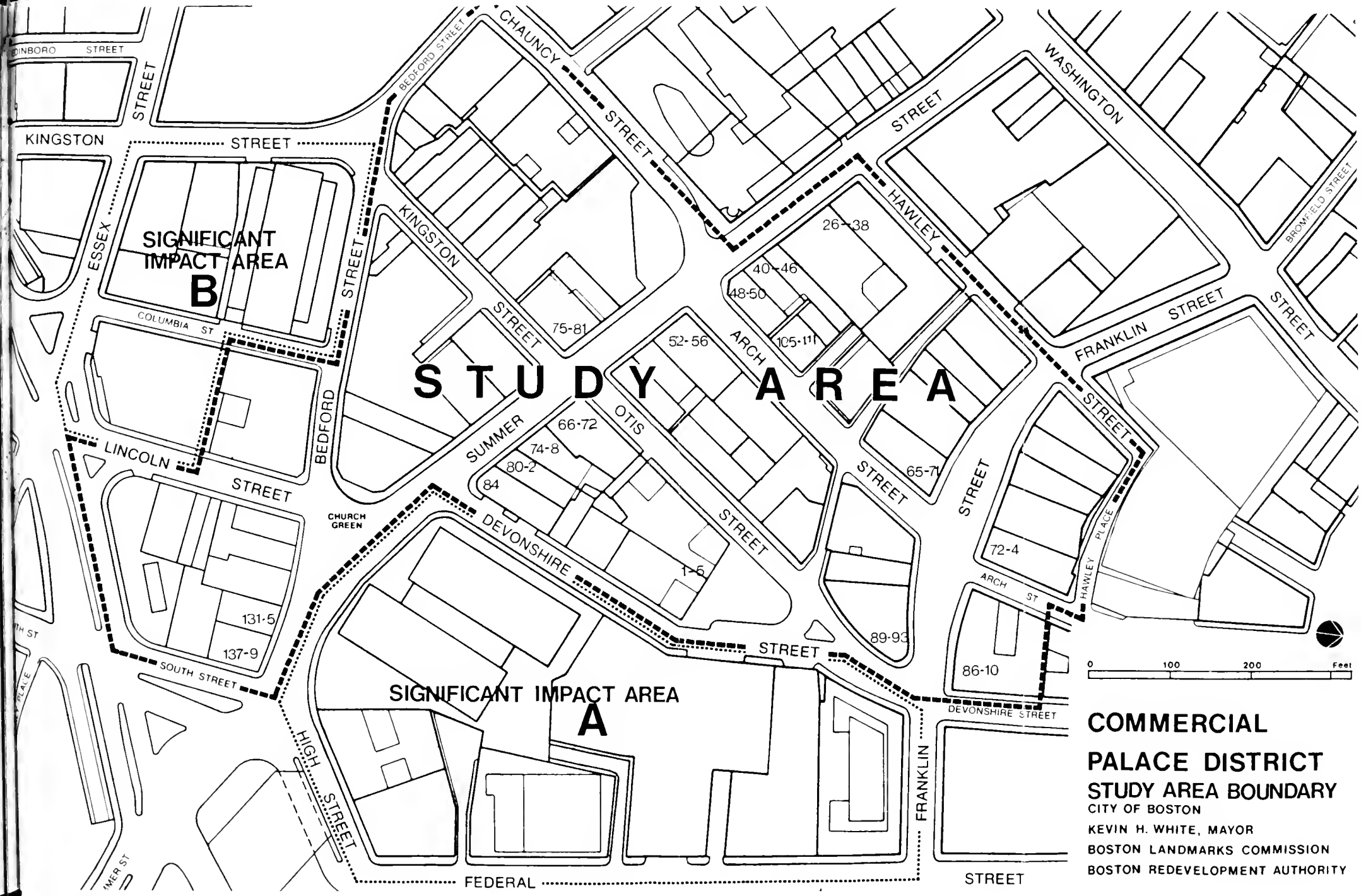
6. Historic District Designation

If incentives for rehabilitation prove insufficient to achieve appropriate upgrading of buildings in the area further consideration should be given to the establishment of a local historic district under Chapter 40C of the General Laws.

7. Public Improvements

A number of recommendations for improving the walking environment within the retail core have come from Skidmore, Owings & Merrill's

recently completed study of that area. Small-scale public improvements consisting of widened sidewalks, landscaping, pedestrian amenities, banners, signage and alley improvements have been suggested. Additional important features designed to enhance the Commercial Palace District are outdoor cafes and on-street vending.



**COMMERCIAL
PALACE DISTRICT
STUDY AREA BOUNDARY**
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I. HISTORICAL AND VISUAL CHARACTER OF THE AREA

A. Architectural & Historical Significance

The Commercial Palace District contains, in the words of author Donlyn Lyndon "the best record of Boston's late 19th century commercial appearance". Once a fashionable residential area, the district was converted, after 1830, to warehousing in response to the prosperous "carrying trade" which transferred goods from the waterfront to the new railroad facilities in the South Cove area. Substantial granite structures were introduced to serve this need, and later were converted to use by dry goods and wool wholesalers.

As the principal trading city for the mills of New England following the Civil War, Boston's dry goods district was the most active in the northeastern United States, retaining its prominence in this regard through the early twentieth century. Dry goods dealers were centered around Chauncy, Summer, Otis and Devonshire Streets, while shoe and leather wholesalers and related dealers and manufacturers gravitated toward the Church Green area.

In November 1872, the entire district was destroyed by the disastrous fire which started on Summer Street and destroyed 776 buildings in a 65 acre area. Most of the buildings now standing in the district were built in the years immediately following the Great Fire of 1872, when, in a heroic effort, the burnt district was rapidly rebuilt with buildings

of similar mass and scale but with new fireproof techniques. These structures, dubbed "the new palaces of Boston merchants" by contemporary newspaper accounts, departed from the earlier more somber granite-style buildings by adopting a variety of Victorian motifs.

While maintaining a similarity of materials, cornice line, and fenestration pattern, they display details characteristic of the Italian Renaissance, Ruskinian Gothic, Panel Brick, and Neo Grec styles which appealed to the Victorians.

Recently found evidence confirms that a handful of prominent Boston architectural firms designed most of the buildings in the district, helping to account for the visual cohesiveness of the area. Represented are the firms of: Emerson & Fehmer, N.J. Bradley, Cummings & Sears, Charles F. Kirby, G.J.F. Bryant & Rogers, and Winslow & Wetherell.

The street pattern of the district is, in itself significant, its winding nature dating back to the colonial period. The most notable feature is the well known "Tontine Crescent" - a bowed area of Franklin Street once flanked by row houses designed by Charles Bulfinch, and still retaining its characteristic shape. The intersection of Summer and Bedford Streets has been known as "Church Green" since the seventeenth century. Bulfinch's octagonal New South Church, 1814, commanded this location during the Federal Period.

B. Individual Building Descriptions

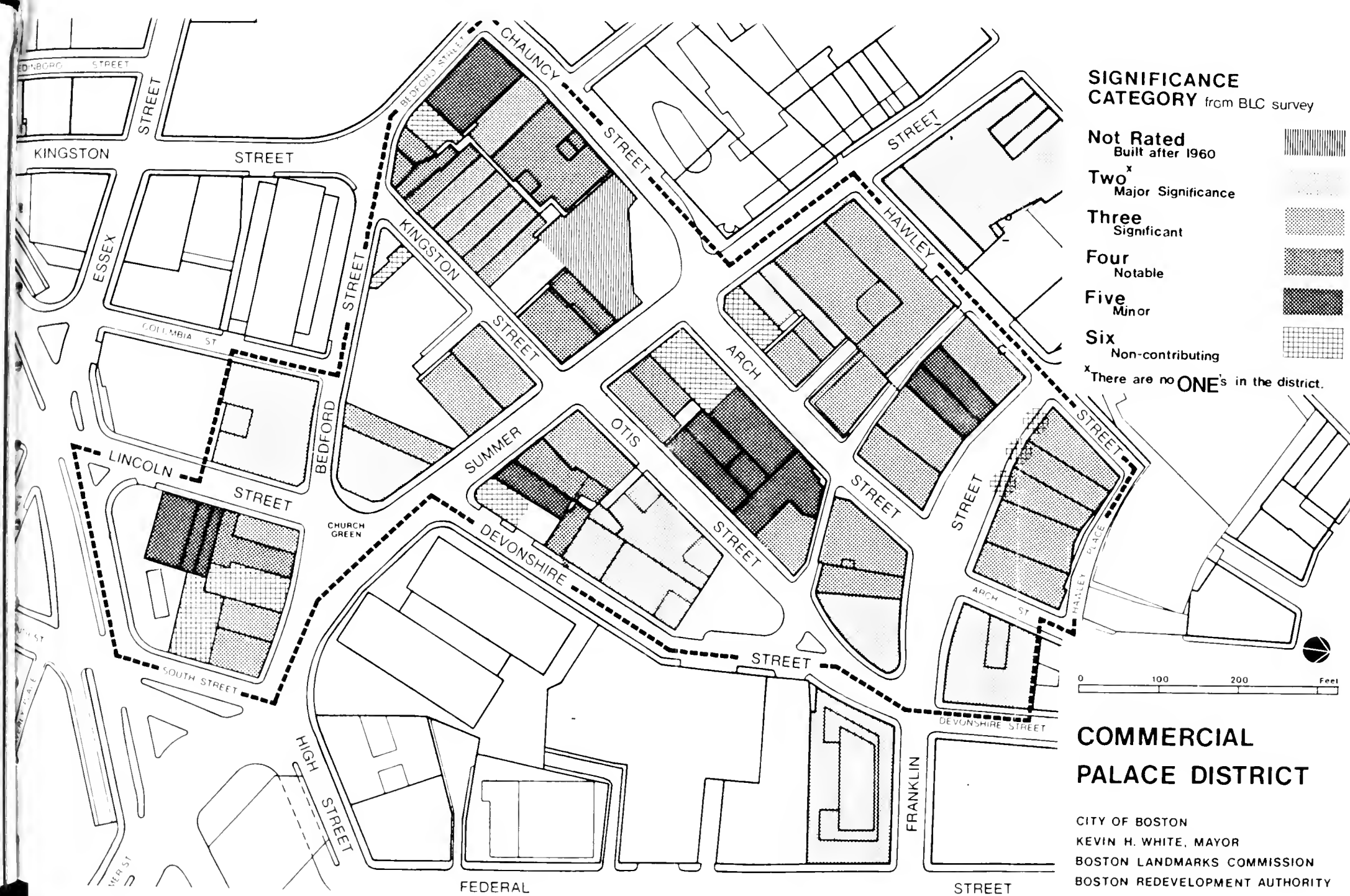
Approximately 26 buildings contribute to the character of the district. Some of the more notable are described below. Descriptions of the remaining buildings can be found in the appendix to this report.

o Church Green, 105-113 Summer Street

Prominently sited and visible from those approaching from the expressway or South Station, the Church Green building was designed by Carl Fehmer of the firm Emerson & Fehmer. The building was erected for its owners, William Faxon, James C. Elm and the Faxon brothers in 1873-74 and is an excellent early example of the French academic architectural principles which played an important role in American architecture during the 1870's and 80's.

o 83-87 Summer Street

The Great Fire of 1872 originated in the basement of the commercial buildings previously on the site of 83-85 Summer Street. At the time of the blaze, 87 Summer Street was owned by William C. Tebbetts, partner in the dry goods firm of Tebbetts, Baldwin and Davis, which occupied the first floor. Tebbetts and his partner Charles Haley built the present imposing granite structure immediately after the fire, from designs generally attributed to the firm of William Ralph Emerson and Carl Fehmer (c.f. Beebe-Weld Building). The attribution is based on a plate of Neo Grec details which appeared in American Architect and Building News in July, 1877.



- o Faxon Stores, 62-64, 66-72 Summer Street

The Faxon interests additionally hired Carl Fehmer to complete their other holdings along Summer Street destroyed in The Great Fire.

Significant as part of a trio of Neo Grec stone buildings standing at the intersection of Summer and Otis Streets, each is notable for its design clarity. Together, the buildings and the complementary Church Green Building form an important stylistic ensemble within the Commercial Palace District.

- o Kennedy's Store, 26-38 Summer Street

Also designed by Carl Fehmer, who did the commercial commissions of the firm Emerson & Fehmer, is the 1873 Kennedy's Store, which was owned by the William Mason estate and replaced the Mercantile Hall, destroyed in the 1872 fire.

This post-fire "commercial palace" remains as the downtown's first and most elaborate example of the Panel Brick style. It is also the western anchor to a row of post-fire commercial palaces along Summer Street. The Summer and Hawley Street facades have heavily articulated surfaces expressed in finely-crafted brick, terra cotta, and sandstone.

From 1874 into the 1890's, the major tenant was Isaac Fenno & Company, manufacturer and dealer in men's and boys' clothing. The firm invented the Fenno cloth cutter which supposedly could



Granite Facade at 66-72 Summer Street, built in c. 1872-1877



Highly articulated brick facade representative of the work of Emerson & Fehmer, built in 1873-74

cut 1,000 to 3,000 garments in a day. Other tenants at the time also were associated with the drygoods and clothing industry. In the 1920's, the Kennedy's Store moved to the structure and stayed until its recent closing.

- o The Beebe-Weld Building, One Winthrop Square

Just over a year after the Great Fire of 1872 destroyed their previous mercantile block, Boston merchants James M. Beebe and William F. Weld built another "commercial palace" on this strategically-placed, trapezoidal site. Beebe, a dry goods merchant on Temple Place, and Weld, a shipping merchant, were neighbors on Beacon Hill as well as collaborators in this real estate venture.

For the second Beebe-Weld building, the owners hired Carl Fehmer (1835-1923) of the Emerson & Fehmer firm. Architecturally, the second Beebe-Weld Building is an interesting example of the transition from the French Second Empire to Neo Grec modes and has recently been sensitively rehabilitated.

- o Bedford Building, 89-105 Bedford Street

The Bedford Building, built in 1874, is one of a few examples of Ruskinian Gothic architecture in the polychromatic style in Boston. It successfully adopts elements of neo-gothic style to available materials and post-fire technological innovations in order to meet the requirements of the growing commercial economy of the late 1800's.

The building was designed by the firm of Cummings and Sears, as a commercial structure for Messrs. Henry and Francis L. Lee, members of a wealthy and prominent Boston merchant family. As such, it reflects the architects' desire to provide their clients and the City of Boston with a functionally designed commercial structure whose aesthetics would reflect the aspirations of its merchant owners.

The polychromatic use of materials and the exterior ornamentation of the building echo both the teachings of John Ruskin and the canons of neo-gothic architecture. Red granite from St. George, New Brunswick, utilized for the first time in downtown Boston, white Vermont marble, and red Philadelphia brick were combined in polychromatic tradition. Further exterior detailing and ornamentation, recall both the Italian influence embedded in the work of Ruskin and the stricter forms of the neo-gothic style.

o The Proctor Building, 100-106 Bedford Street

The Proctor Building is an excellent example of the influence of building materials and technology on architectural form. It was designed in 1897-98 by the well-respected and prolific Boston firm of Walter T. Winslow (1843-1909), George H. Wetherall (1854-1930) and Henry F. Bigelow (1867-1928) for the estate of Thomas E. Proctor, a prominent Boston lawyer. Fitting into a small triangular lot and dwarfed by the massive five-and six-story commercial blocks which originally surrounded it, the Proctor Building is a dazzling display of late 19th century architectural terra cotta. Its small-scale,

high relief, remarkable craftsmanship and unusual use of the Spanish Renaissance style give this structure unique significance in the city's architectural heritage, representing the most elegant and extensive use of terra cotta on a small commercial structure.

- o Ferris-Baker Block, 40-46 Summer Street (Long's Jewelry)

Only six cast iron fronted buildings remain in the downtown. This is one of the few which are largely intact, and it has the best iron front designed in the High Victorian Italianate style. Charles F. Kirby designed the building in 1873 for the heirs of Walter Baker and Mortimer C. Ferne. The original tenants were manufacturers and jobbers in textile and clothing-related companies.

Cast iron was never a common building material here, as it was in New York. Most intact aside from this one are 120 Fulton, the McLaughlin Building and 112-116 State Street, the Richards Building. Both erected in the 1840's, they exemplify the earlier Renaissance Revival style.

- o Wigglesworth Building, 89-93 Franklin Street

Designed in 1873, the Wigglesworth Building points its angled corner at Devonshire Street and the financial area. Its wrap-around facade is rhythmically banded with red brick and light gray stone trim of granite and limestone, accentuating rows of windows and is an exuberant example of the Panel Brick style.



Cast Iron Facade erected in 1873 at 44-46 Summer Street, current location of Long Jewelers

The Building's architect, Nathaniel J. Bradlee (1829-1888), is known as one of Boston's most prolific nineteenth-century architects. Having studied architecture in Boston the office of George Dexter, to whose practice he succeeded, Bradlee is believed to have design more than 500 commercial blocks in downtown Boston in addition to blocks of row houses and other commissions throughout the Boston area. Following the Fire of 1872, which destroyed many of his earlier buildings, Bradlee was active in the re-building of the burned district. Together with his students, Walter T. Winslow and George Wetherell, Bradlee was an important influence on Boston's commercial architecture directly through his own designs and indirectly through the firm of Winslow and Wetherell which succeeded to his large commercial practice. Original plans and elevations of the Wigglesworth Building are contained in the Boston Athanaeum's collection of N.J. Bradlee's drawings.

From 1876 to 1900, this was the home of Abram French & Company, (crockery, glass and giftware), a wholesale business, which shipped to all parts of the U.S. and to Canada. The company was founded in 1822 by Andrew T. Hall, becoming French, Wells and Company, then Abram French & Company.

o 72-74 Franklin Street (corner of Arch Street)

Cummings and Sears designed two outstanding post-fire "commercial palaces", this one of 1874 and the Bedford Building at 89-103 Bedford Street. Proving their versatility, they worked in the High Victorian

Gothic style for the Bedford Building, and employed an unusual combination of Renaissance Revival and Neo-Grec styling on this one. Such rich granite buildings as 72-74 Franklin Street show the optimism which flavored the post-fire rebuilding of the downtown. With a corner location, this building is integral to the character of the area today.

Trustees of the J. Sears estate had this building erected. Originally the entire building was occupied by Simons, Hatch and Whitten, jobbers of men's furnishing goods.

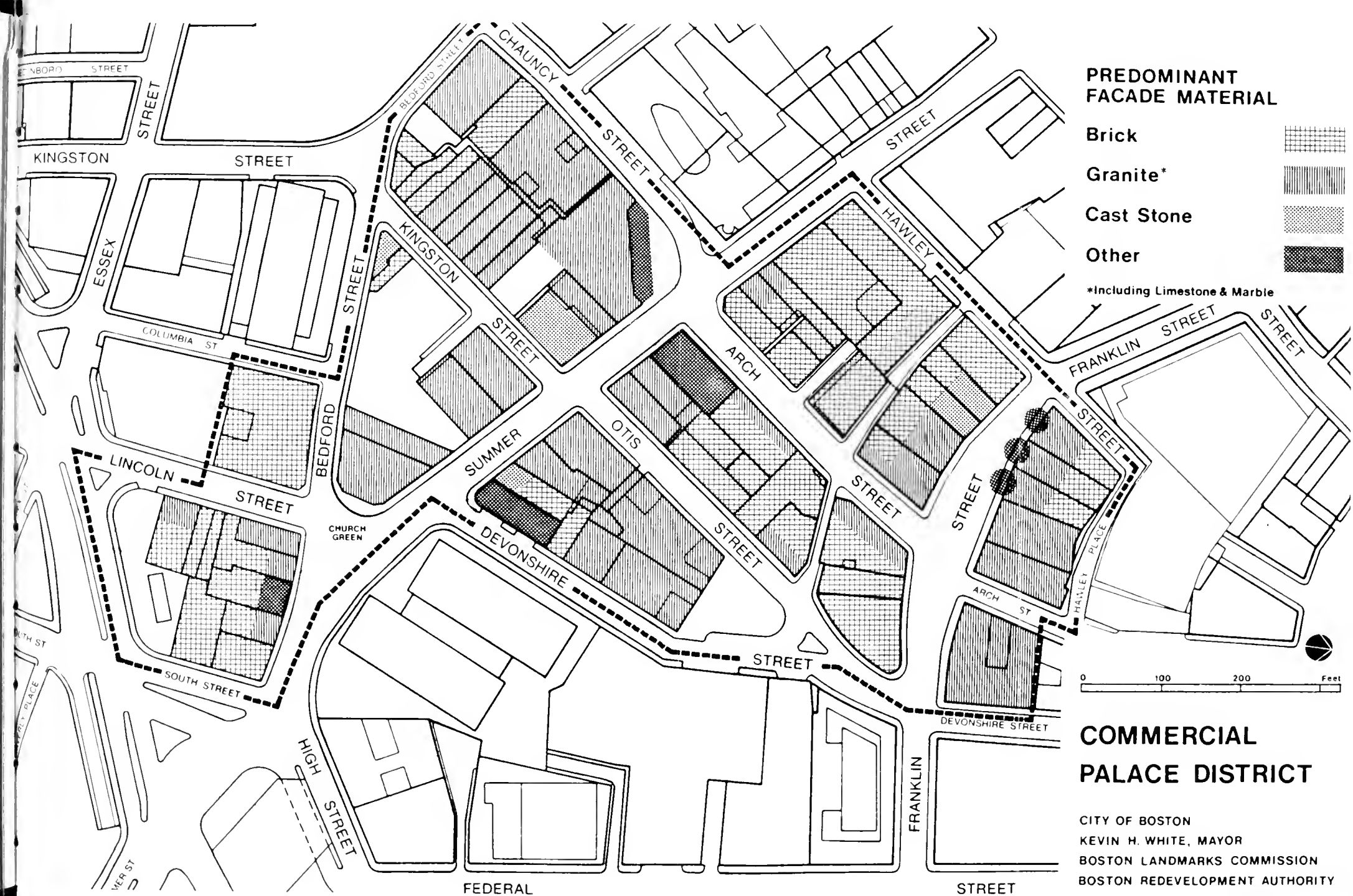
C. Building Heights

There is a remarkable consistency of building heights within the district, with a predominant height of about 7 stories. This reinforces the sense of place by avoiding sudden or extreme differences in size or scale. Several buildings whose facades do not contribute to the overall character of the area (Summer Street, at the corner of Arch Street, and Franklin Street, for instance) nonetheless maintain similar cornice lines and therefore contribute to the district in that way.

D. Materials

Two materials, brick and granite, dominate the district. Other materials, primarily sandstone and limestone, are used extensively, and because their color and appearance are similar to granite, they reinforce the sense that the district is brick and "stone". Many facades combine brick and sandstone which are used as horizontal courses and/or window surrounds; others use the brick as a decorative element on a predominantly





sandstone facade or to build upper floors. A few buildings are marble or cast stone and all blend with the predominant materials to sustain the visual cohesiveness of the district. The double front cast iron facade is intended to resemble cut masonry, in the cast iron tradition of replicating other building materials, and consequently blends well with other structures within the district.

Examples of non-contributing materials within the district are plate or strip glass (55 Summer and 123-9 Summer) and modern metal panels (52-6 Summer and 42-62 Franklin). Research suggests that the buildings on Franklin Street were merely covered with panels and that the original buildings exist, substantially intact underneath.

E. Fenestration and Facades

The unusual richness of the district is due largely to the skillful handling of the limited number of building materials. The short time during which most of the buildings were constructed and designed produced a group of buildings whose facades have the following characteristics:

- o vertical, rectilinear windows, with double-hung sash, arranged in a regular pattern, aligned vertically;
- o dramatic expression of horizontals, integrated with vertical articulations;
- o highly articulated architectural details which create intense shadow-play on the facades;
- o projecting cornices, often with pediments, which create an interesting skyline.



Summer Street at Otis, showing upgraded storefronts that re-establish the buildings on the street.

The captioned photographs in this study illustrate these characteristics and help to define the visual character of the district.

F. Setbacks and Street-Containment

One of the traditional characteristics of urban, commercial districts is the definition of the street made by facades placed directly along the property line, with no setback. With only one exception (the Newworld Bank, formerly the Charlestown Savings, at the corner of Chauncy and Summer Streets), the buildings that remain within the district adhere to this alignment. Even those buildings whose mass and/or design are non-contributory still preserve the definition and containment of the street. Unfortunately, newer buildings adjacent to the district are set back from the street providing an increased pedestrian area but eroding the definition and containment of the street and weakening the integrity of major public spaces, most notably Church Green.

G. Non-Contributing Factors

There are several factors which either detract from or do not contribute to the cohesiveness and character of the district. The cumulative effect of these factors has not yet eroded the quality of the district, but their impact is very strong.

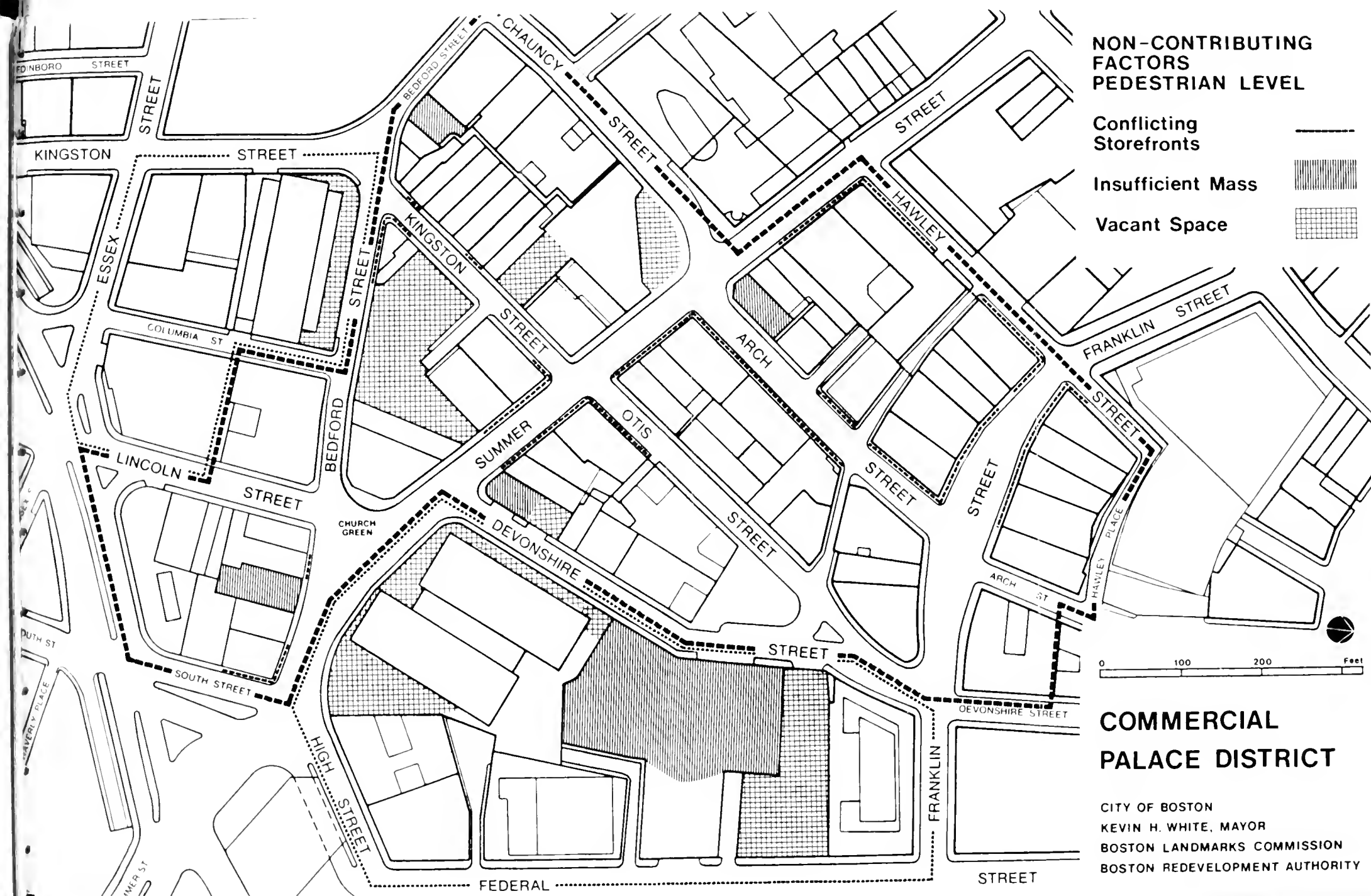
o Incompatible Mass

Buildings with heights that are significantly lower or higher than adjacent buildings create a disruption in the street facade and uncomfortable transitions in scale. Juxtaposed next to buildings of moderate height, the Blue Cross Building is jarring and intrusive.

On the other hand, several buildings which are too small, such as the Union Warren Bank, fail to reinforce the scale of the district and expose unfinished facades. When low buildings are at corners, as in two cases in the district their negative impact is doubled.

- o Storefronts - These are defined as the first and/or second floor facing the street. The extent to which original designs have been removed or altered is considerable. Storefront designs sympathetic to the design of each building should be encouraged by the City to both strengthen the visual quality of the buildings and improve the pedestrian experience.
- o Vacant land - There is a limited amount of vacant land within the district. Specific guidelines are needed for these parcels to ensure that development will contribute to the district. The single building parcels should closely match the scale, materials, and design of their abutters, and the larger parcels should respect the characteristics of the district.
- o Ground level setbacks - There are a few examples abutting the district where a building, or a portion of a building is set back from the predominant facade plane or street alignment, leaving ill defined, inhospitable spaces. Remedial action in those instances might include new arcade-like low rise structures to enliven the street level facade and reestablish the continuity of the facade.

- o Incompatible materials - There are a variety of materials that blend into the district, with a few glaring exceptions. The application of metal panels and flush windows on Franklin Street and the use of blank panelled-metal seen at the corner of Summer and Arch Streets detract from the district.



II. ANALYSIS OF FACTORS INFLUENCING THE COMMERCIAL PALACE DISTRICT

A. Ownership Patterns

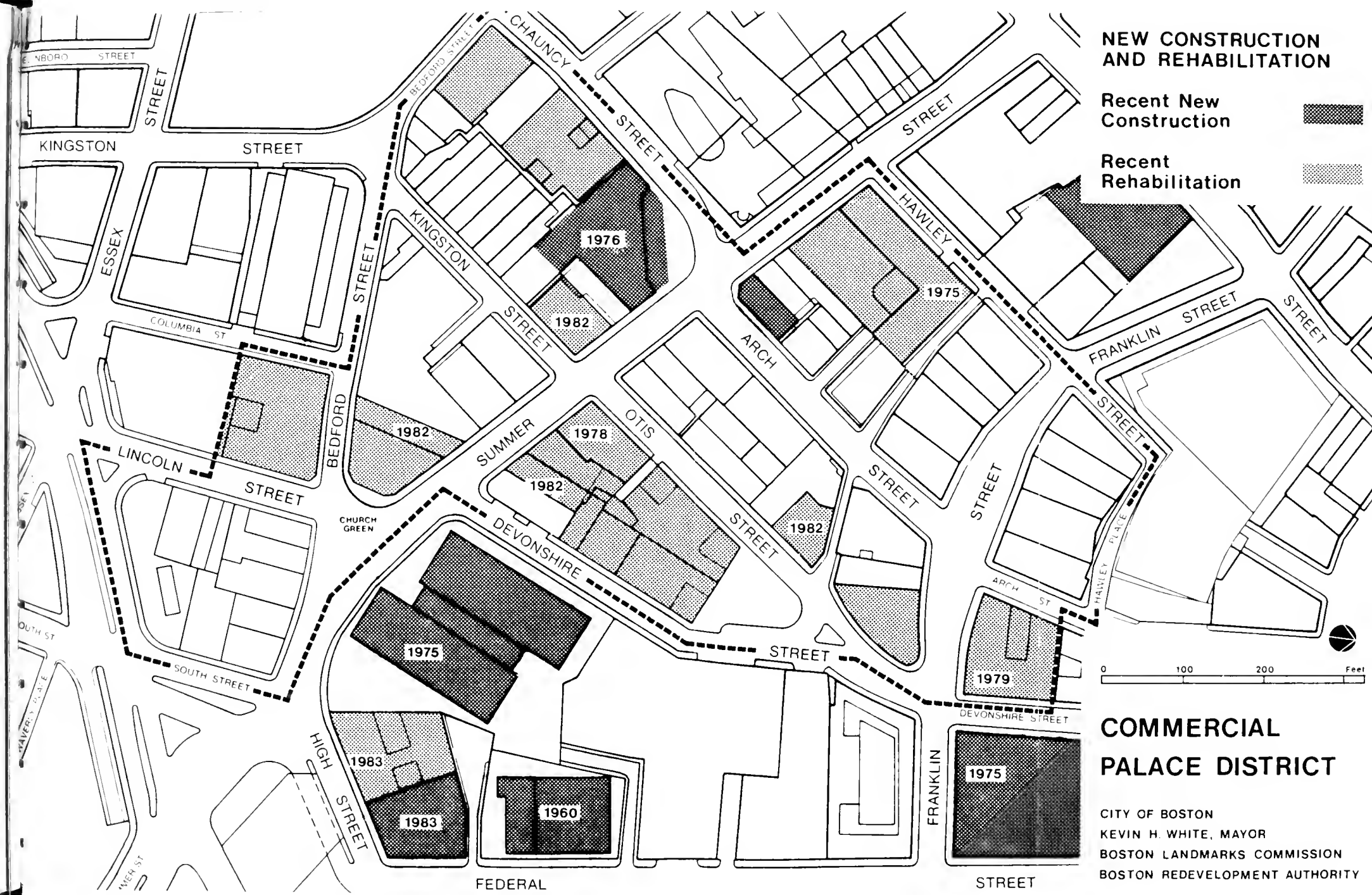
An analysis was made of ownership patterns within the study area by examining City assessing records for 1982. This was done to determine whether large areas under single ownership exist, thereby suggesting probable new development sites. It appears, however, that ownership is very diverse and highly fragmented. With the exception of the Kennedy block on Summer Street, where it is known that options have been purchased on the building and adjacent properties, no other large areas exist under single ownership.

B. Recent Rehabilitation and New Development

The accompanying map illustrates both new construction and rehabilitation which have taken place generally within the past seven years. A number of rehabilitation projects, especially within the past few years, is evidence of the strong demand for rehabilitated office space in the area. All of the new construction, primarily for the office market, took place in the mid-70's. The building at 155 Federal Street, currently under construction on the site of a former parking lot, demonstrates that there is continued development interest in the area for office space in new construction.

C. Projected Market Potential

The following is a summary of the market potential for various kinds of uses within the study area. In discussing the market question, it is useful to consider, at the same time, the relationship of the study area



**NEW CONSTRUCTION
AND REHABILITATION**

- Recent New Construction
- Recent Rehabilitation

**COMMERCIAL
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to the rest of the downtown and to off-street parking, public transportation and highways. The Commercial Palace District enjoys very good transportation access via both public transportation and highways. The area is served by two subway stations (Washington and South Station), commuter rail (South Station), express buses (to the west via turnpike), and several surface bus routes. Although the roads within the district are generally narrow and congested, the perimeter of the area is easily accessible to both the central artery and the Massachusetts Turnpike. Off-street parking is available in the district within two parking garages (Winthrop Square and Kingston) and in the adjacent Woolworth garage, as well as existing surface lots.

- o Retail Market

Retail market trends in downtown Boston during the 1980's look bright given a variety of factors that have boosted the size and strength of the market potential. Though the Washington Street retail area experienced an extended period of contraction during the post-war years, it has been the site of major public and private investment in the 1970's and shows signs of stability and increased activity. On the strength of the Downtown Crossing pedestrian mall project, new Lafayette Place retail development, the growing employment base in the financial district, and the residential growth described above, the retail outlook for Downtown Boston is improving.

o Office Development

The market for both new and rehabilitated office space in downtown Boston is expected to remain strong through the 1980's given the steady and significant growth of finance, real estate, insurance, communications, utilities, and professional and business services. Although demand for new Class A office space is likely to remain considerably larger in absolute size than that for rehabilitated space, the rehab/secondary market should continue to prosper. Even though the national economic picture is cloudy over the next two years, the strength of the local economy combined with the healthy position of the downtown office market is likely to enable Boston to escape any severe setback.

o Institutional Market

Medical, educational, and cultural institutions have been a prime sector of economic growth in Boston. The decade of the 1980's is likely to see moderation in these fast-growth "industries" to some extent. A major factor in this outlook is that educational institutions will not expand as before given the declining school age population through age 24. Medical institutions, however, will continue to grow at an accelerated rate as the quality of health care improves and the population ages. Cultural and recreational institutions should show continued moderate growth as demand for such services grows to complement increasing leisure time activities and rising income levels. The market potential for institutional growth in the Commercial Palace District, specifically, appears to be quite

small. This is largely because there are no institutions in this area at the present time and typically institutions expand in areas directly adjacent to their current sites or where similar uses are concentrated.

o Residential Development

Boston's downtown residential population increased nearly 50% during the last decade. Recent household survey information indicates that downtown residents are increasingly well-to-do, well educated, and hold professional positions in the swelling, service-oriented Boston economy. It further documents the trend toward smaller households and housing units in this area. With 84% of the housing in rental units, many of them new, it indicates that a strong demand exists for both rental and owned units in the downtown area. Moreover, over 50% of residents have moved in from outside of Boston, indicating the attractiveness of this area for residences.

o Industrial Market

Manufacturing in Boston is projected to show a slight net growth in the 1980's after a number of years of decline and suburban out-migration. The market potential for manufacturing in the Commercial Palace District appears to be minimal. Presently, there is no manufacturing directly located in this district and it is not zoned or built for manufacturing uses.

D. Potential Development Sites

Based upon an analysis of ownership patterns and the availability of large, vacant sites, it appears that there are two potential development sites within the Commercial Palace District. The first is the site of a large surface parking lot behind the recently rehabilitated Church Green building. The second is within the Kennedy block on Summer Street. Options have been purchased on the building and adjacent parcels, an indication of developer interest in this site.

Three additional development sites exist immediately adjacent to the study area within the Significant Impact Areas A and B. Two are in public ownership, the Winthrop Square garage and the Kingston Street garage. The third is the block bounded by Lincoln, South and Summer Streets and the Surface Artery, where again it is known that the parcel is within a single ownership.

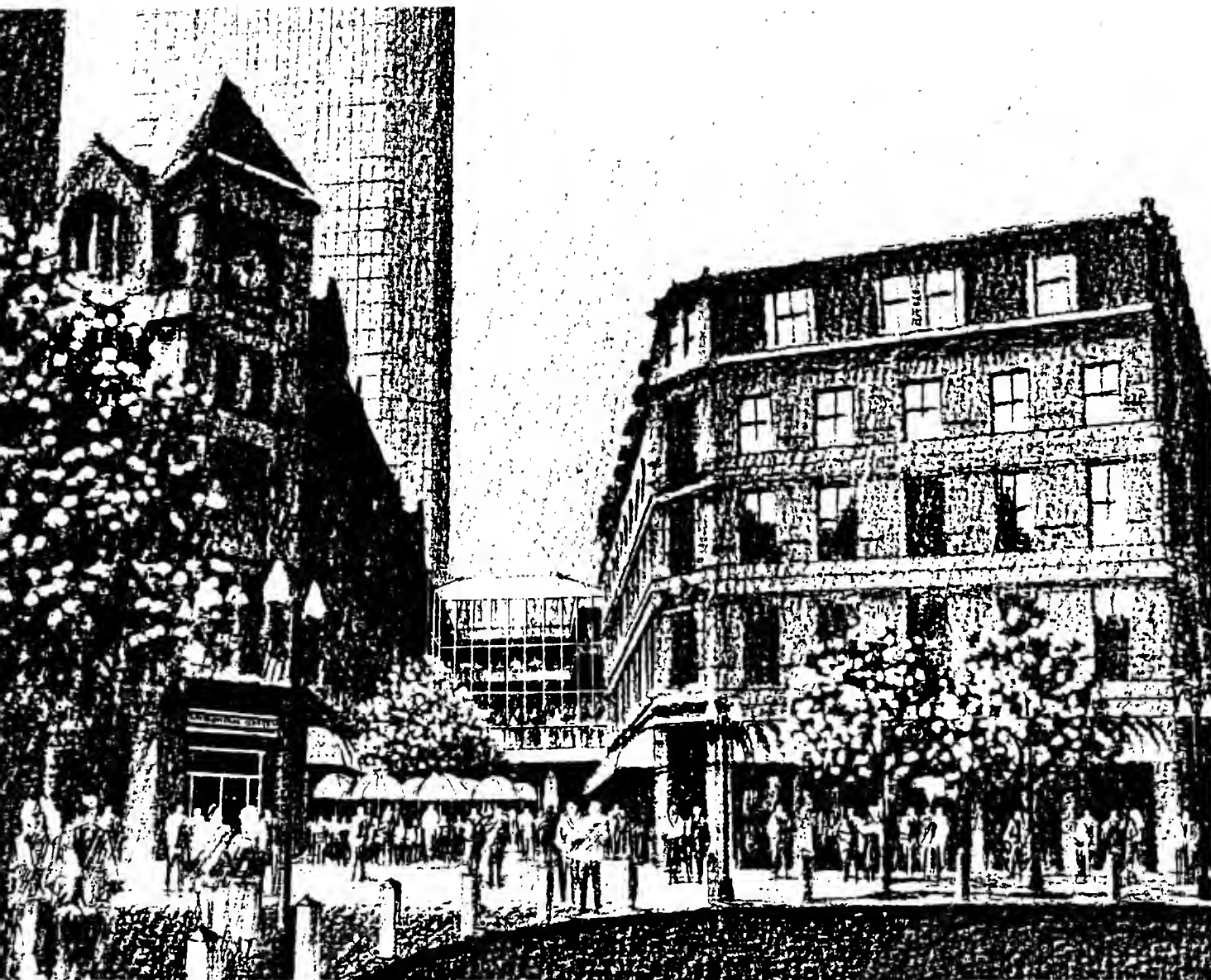


Illustration from SOM study showing public improvements at Church Green/Bedford Street.

III. POLICY ISSUES

There are two major policy issues having to do with the preservation of the special character of the Commercial Palace district and the location and design of new development affecting it.

1. Is major new development appropriate to this district? Assuming that the market exists for such development, can it be designed to be compatible with the historic scale and character of the area? Is it possible to make new development fit into its context in terms of height, bulk, and overall appearance? Are there sites within the study area where contrast in scale, mass or materials would complement and enrich the historic character of the district?

2. Can buildings which contribute to the historic and architectural quality of the district be preserved? While there are examples of successful rehabilitation of several notable buildings within the district, a number of important buildings have been destroyed in recent years and others have been insensitively remodelled. Can the buildings which remain be protected and their feasible and appropriate rehabilitation encouraged? What steps can be taken to ensure continuity within the evolutionary growth of the city?

The following policies are intended to address these issues:

1. Within the Commercial Palace district, emphasis will be on the preservation of existing buildings which contribute to the character of the district. Incentives for the appropriate rehabilitation of these buildings will be adopted and efforts will be made to encourage private appreciation of the values of the district. Regulatory measures will be adopted if necessary. Rehabilitation projects seeking city approval will be reviewed in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Section V of this report.

2. Major development will be allowed only at the perimeter of the district where other high rise buildings exist or where sufficient vacant land exists to create a new environment. New development projects needing city approval will be reviewed in accordance with guidelines outlined in Section V of this report.



Summer Street from Church Green on April 17, 1914





Illustration from SOM study showing proposed Plaza at Summer Street, from Church Green.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Recommended Public Actions

1. National Register District

Upon recommendation of the Boston Landmarks Commission and notification of all property owners in the area, the Massachusetts Historical Commission can nominate this area to the Secretary of the Interior for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, provided that no more than 50% of the property owners have not submitted written objections.

Although National Register listing requires an environmental impact review of any intended action using Federal funds (or State funds, once the State Register becomes operative), the primary impact of National Register listing lies in the economic incentives for historic preservation.

Buildings that are included in the National Register District, and which are certified as contributing to those factors which the district was created to protect, are eligible to receive a 25% Investment Tax Credit for rehabilitation work that meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. In addition, only one half of the Investment Tax Credit is deducted from the depreciable base of the rehabilitation improvements, which may be written off over 15 years on a straight line basis. The Federal government thus provides

large subsidies through the taxation system to encourage private developers to rehabilitate old buildings, providing that a reasonably sensible set of standards is followed.

The most major limitation to utilization of the Investment Tax Credits would occur if the cost of rehabilitation work did not exceed the taxpayer's adjusted basis (cost of the building plus capital improvements, less depreciation) or \$5,000 within a 24-month period, which would render the project ineligible for the investment tax credit. Architectural plans should be completed for approval before the rehabilitation begins, and this process might deter developers or architects unfamiliar with principles of building preservation and apprehensive about their ability to secure such approval.

2. Commercial Area Revitalization District (CARD) Program

The Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) administers the state-enacted CARD program in the City of Boston through the preparation of CARD plans and the initial review and approval of CARD projects located within CARD plan boundaries.

In summary, the CARD program is a mechanism by which the following economic development incentives, before available only to industrial enterprises, can now be applied to commercial and mixed-use projects located within CARD plan boundaries.

- a. financing at interest rates several points below conventional rates through tax-exempt (to the lending institution) Industrial Revenue Bonds negotiated between the applicant and a private lender and approved by the City and State agencies involved.
- b. mortgage insurance, limited to approximately \$400,000 per project, on rehabilitation of commercial buildings.
- c. a credit against a corporation's state excise tax liability and a 25 percent payroll deduction through the Urban Job Incentive Program.

3. Boston Landmarks Commission Designation

The Boston Landmarks Commission was established in 1975 by a special act of the legislature, in order to serve as a mechanism for the orderly preservation of the City's historic buildings and neighborhoods. Designation by the Commission has two purposes. First, it recognizes the designated property as an important part of the City's legacy. Second, it makes the property subject to a systematic design review process. Once designated, a property cannot be demolished or its exterior appearance substantially changed, without prior approval by the Commission.

The process of designation includes the preparation of a study report on the property, a public hearing, and approval by the Mayor and City Council as well as the Commission. To be designated,

a property must be of significance "to the City and the Commonwealth, the New England Region or the Nation" (Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975).

4. Preservation Easements

The Tax Treatment Extension Act of 1980 amended the Internal Revenue Code to make permanent authority for charitable gifts of easements in perpetuity to qualified organizations. Although no easement donations utilizing the charitable gift deduction are known to have been made in Boston, there has been considerable activity in this area in Washington, D.C., Seattle and Philadelphia, despite the fact that the proposed IRS regulations on this subject have yet to be released.

To qualify, the buildings concerned must be listed on the National Register, individually or certified as contributing to a National Register District before the taxpayer files a return claiming a charitable gift deduction.

The key to the financial incentives lies in proper appraisal techniques. An appraisal is made of the property before and after the easement principally through the use of comparable values and income stream analysis. The value of a parcel with a hypothetical new building is not germane to the valuation of an easement.

The greatest financial incentives for donating an easement will be on relatively small, preferably underutilized buildings which have not been rehabilitated. There can be special advantages to an owner whose buildings have been fully depreciated. Since the IRS does not recognize a negative basis, a taxpayer can obtain additional tax savings through easement donation, even though the building is fully depreciated.

Easement donations should be timed to precede rehabilitation and possible landmark designation and/or local historic district creation. If an appraisal is performed on a building which has been recently rehabilitated, the value of the easement may be substantially less than if the easement had been donated before rehabilitation. There is reason to doubt whether any value can be imputed to the donation of an easement, if the development rights have been previously modified by landmark designation or historic district designation from the overall bundle of rights associated with property ownership.

There is a compelling body of thought that suggests that responsible preservation organizations holding easements should require the donors to make a financial contribution which become part of a pooled endowment fund for easement enforcement. The amount of the contribution would be scaled to the size of the building, the value of the easement donation, and the projected costs of enforcement over time.

Historic Boston Incorporated and the Boston Landmarks Commission are currently exploring the feasibility of establishing a preservation easement program in Boston.

5. Public Information Program

The purpose of this program would be to inform property owners of the provisions for an area listed in the National Register of Historic Places, Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credits, and tax advantages associated with voluntary donation of preservation easements. In addition, property owners would be informed of the provisions of a CARD designation, and procedures for pursuing projects within a CARD area. Finally, the public information program would serve as a guide for private rehabilitation and new development efforts through the dissemination of overall design guidelines for the Commercial Palace District. These design guidelines are described in the following section.

6. Local Historic District

A local historic district can provide for a design review process that would regulate changes to existing buildings, prevent unwanted demolition, and influence the design of new buildings within the district.

Locally administered historic districts may be established under Chapter 40C of Massachusetts General Laws to accomplish three purposes: (1) to protect distinctive characteristics of buildings

significant to the history of the Commonwealth; (2) to maintain and improve the settings of those buildings; (3) to encourage new designs compatible with existing buildings in the district.

Aside from architectural and cultural considerations, the major criteria for establishing an historic district is to assure that the relationships of a sufficient number of buildings to each other creates a whole which is greater than the sum of its parts.

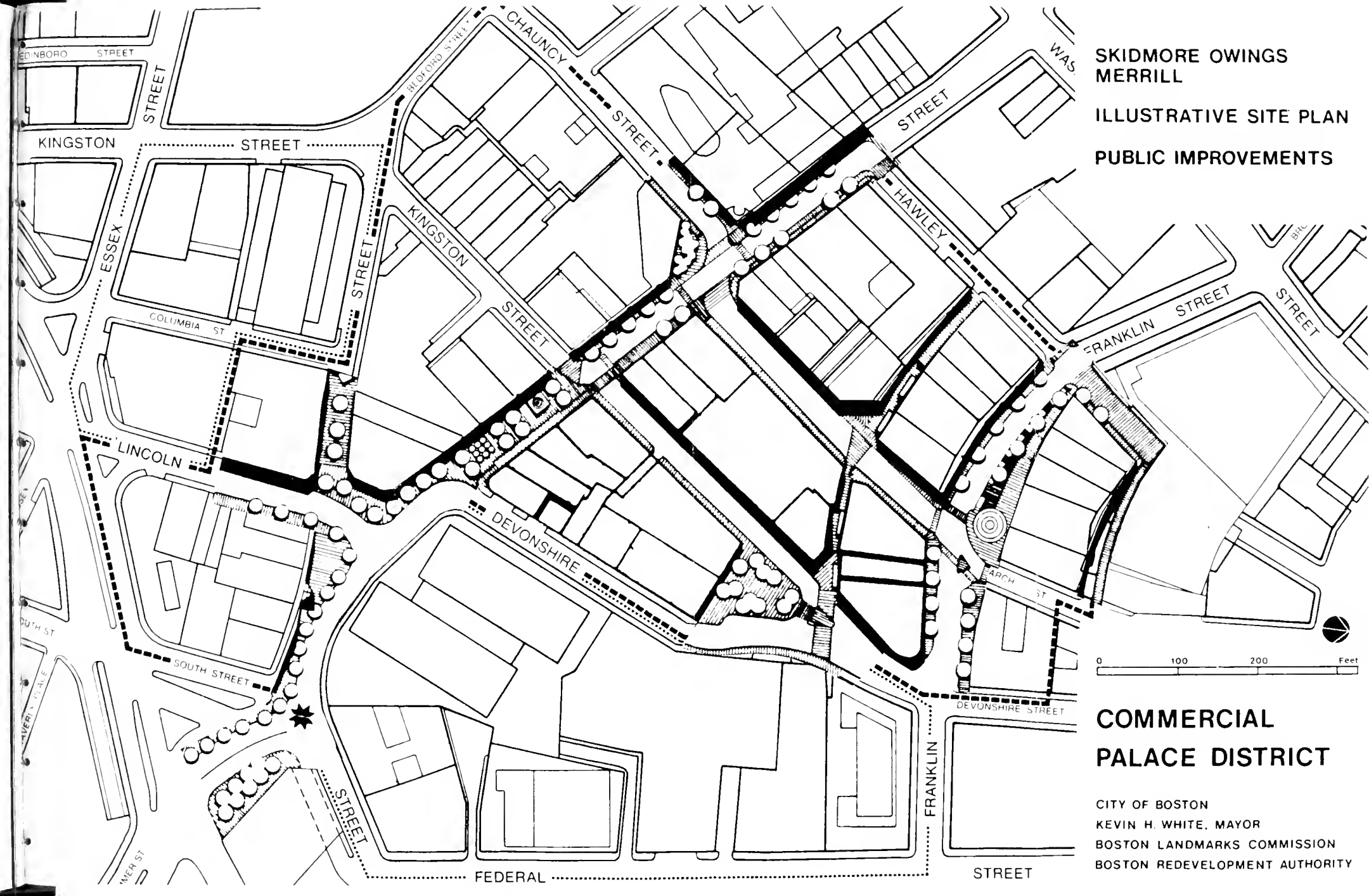
The Boston Landmarks Commission is the agency which would prepare an historic district study report, identifying what should be preserved and recommending how it should be protected. After soliciting comments on the report from the Massachusetts Historical Commission, the Boston Redevelopment Authority, and the public, the Landmarks Commission would prepare a final report with recommendations to the City Council. Creation of the historic district would require a 2/3 vote of the Council.

The effectiveness of a Chapter 40C historic district depends largely upon how the ordinance is written and the zeal with which its provisions are enforced. A local historic district is a potentially strong tool and thus might generate significant opposition from owners holding properties for speculative value or for the imminent development of new buildings on a larger scale than is presently found in the district.

7. Public Improvements

Several recommendations for improving the walking environment within the retail core have come from Skidmore, Owings & Merrill's recently completed study of that area. Specific physical improvements for the Commercial Palace District include:

- o Small-scale public improvements consisting of landscaping, pedestrian amenities, banners, signage, and alley improvements. As shown on the following plan, landscaping plays a significant role in the improvement of the district.
- o Additional important features designed to enhance the district are outdoor cafes, on-street vending, and a series of banners that mark the entry points to the retail core, including at Summer Street and High Street.
- o Snow Place requires special attention as an especially well-traveled route from the Financial District to Downtown Crossing. Snow Place leads from major office buildings on Federal Street to Hawley Street at the rear of Filene's, and has the potential of becoming a pleasant, small-scale alternate route into the Downtown Crossing area. Shops could open new entrances into the alley, paving could be improved, and landscaping and lighting could be introduced. Proposals for such changes have been made both by the City and by abutting owners.



SKIDMORE OWINGS
MERRILL

ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PLAN

PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

COMMERCIAL PALACE DISTRICT

CITY OF BOSTON
KEVIN H. WHITE, MAYOR
BOSTON LANDMARKS COMMISSION
BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

- o Another important link from the Financial District to Downtown Crossing is Franklin Street. Currently well-traveled by pedestrians, Franklin Street can easily accommodate widened sidewalks and even a garden area which would provide trees, benches, and a fountain (see plan). This proposed garden area would evoke the original garden which stood in the eighteenth century at the entry to a grouping of sixteen rowhouses called the "Tontine Crescent".
- o Moving the Turnpike ramp from South Street to Atlantic Avenue will eliminate regional traffic on South Street allowing it to be closed in the vicinity of Dewey Square, creating two new pedestrian plazas and a potential development site on the Lincoln/Summer Block.
- o Relocating the express buses to Kingston Street will allow Summer Street to be closed between Devonshire and Otis Street creating a major new pedestrian plaza.

B. RECOMMENDED DESIGN GUIDELINES

1. General

The intent of the design guidelines for rehabilitation of existing buildings and construction of new buildings affecting the Commercial Palace District is to reinforce the traditional architectural and urban design characteristics which are still predominant in the area but have been eroded in recent years by new construction and insensitive

rehabilitation. Because of the fragility of this character caused by recent change, an effort should be made to retain the maximum amount of historic material and to incorporate, in new construction, the area's most salient characteristics.

2. Rehabilitation Standards

All rehabilitation work within the Commercial Palace District should be done in accordance with the Standards for Rehabilitation prepared by Technical Preservation Services, National Park Services, Department of the Interior, which are the generally accepted criteria for rehabilitation. Compliance with these standards is a prerequisite for Tax Credit Certification; compliance will adequately protect the appearance of the buildings in the Commercial Palace District. The Standards are:

- a. Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide a compatible use for a property which requires minimal alterations of the building, structure, or site and its environment, or to use a property for its originally intended purpose.
- b. The distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure or site and its environment shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features should be avoided when possible.

- c. All buildings, structures and sites shall be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations that have no historical basis and which seek to create an appearance older than the building shall be discouraged.
- d. Changes which may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure or site and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right, and this significance shall be recognized and respected.
- e. Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize a building, structure or site shall be treated with sensitivity.
- f. Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced, whenever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplications rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other buildings or structures.

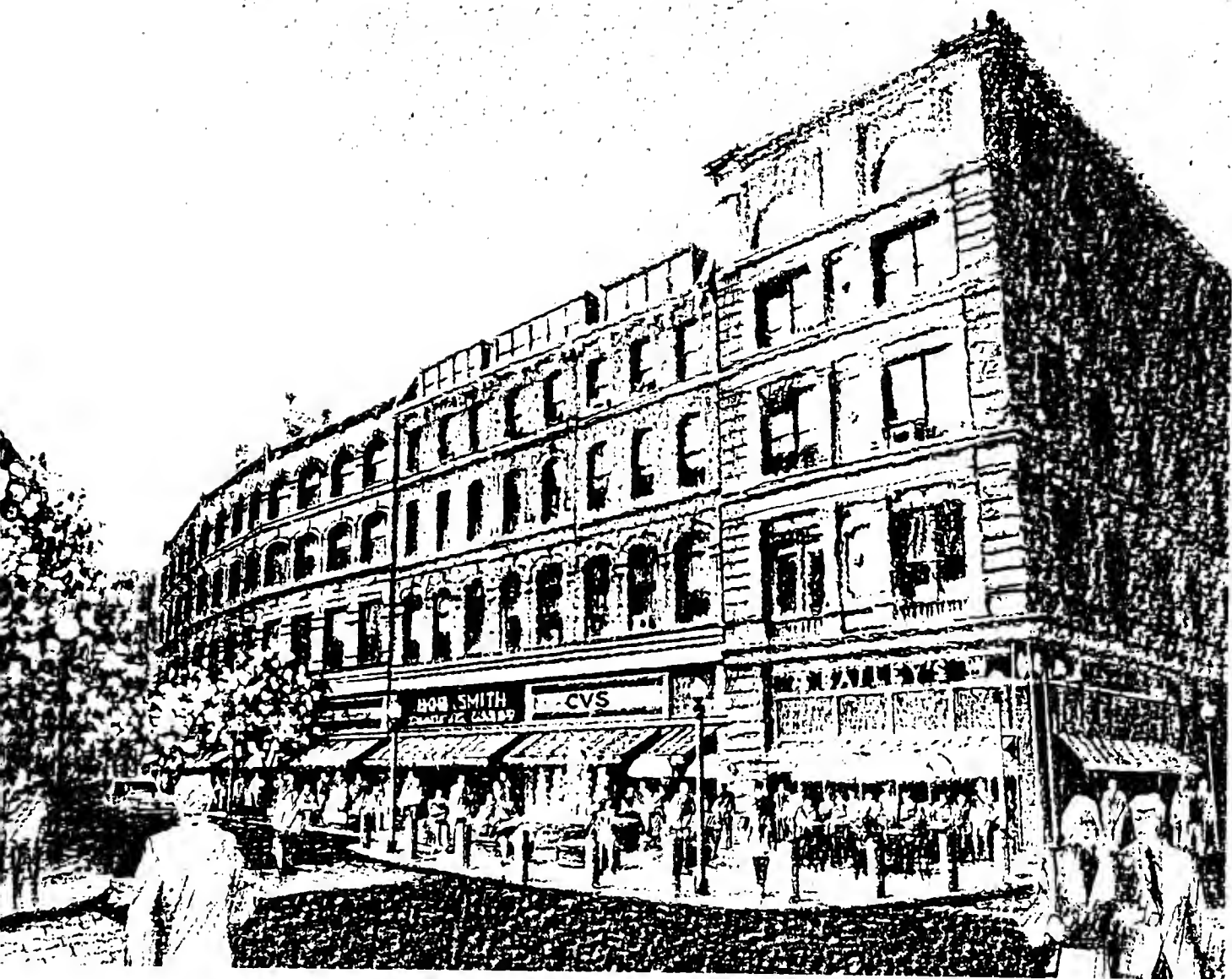
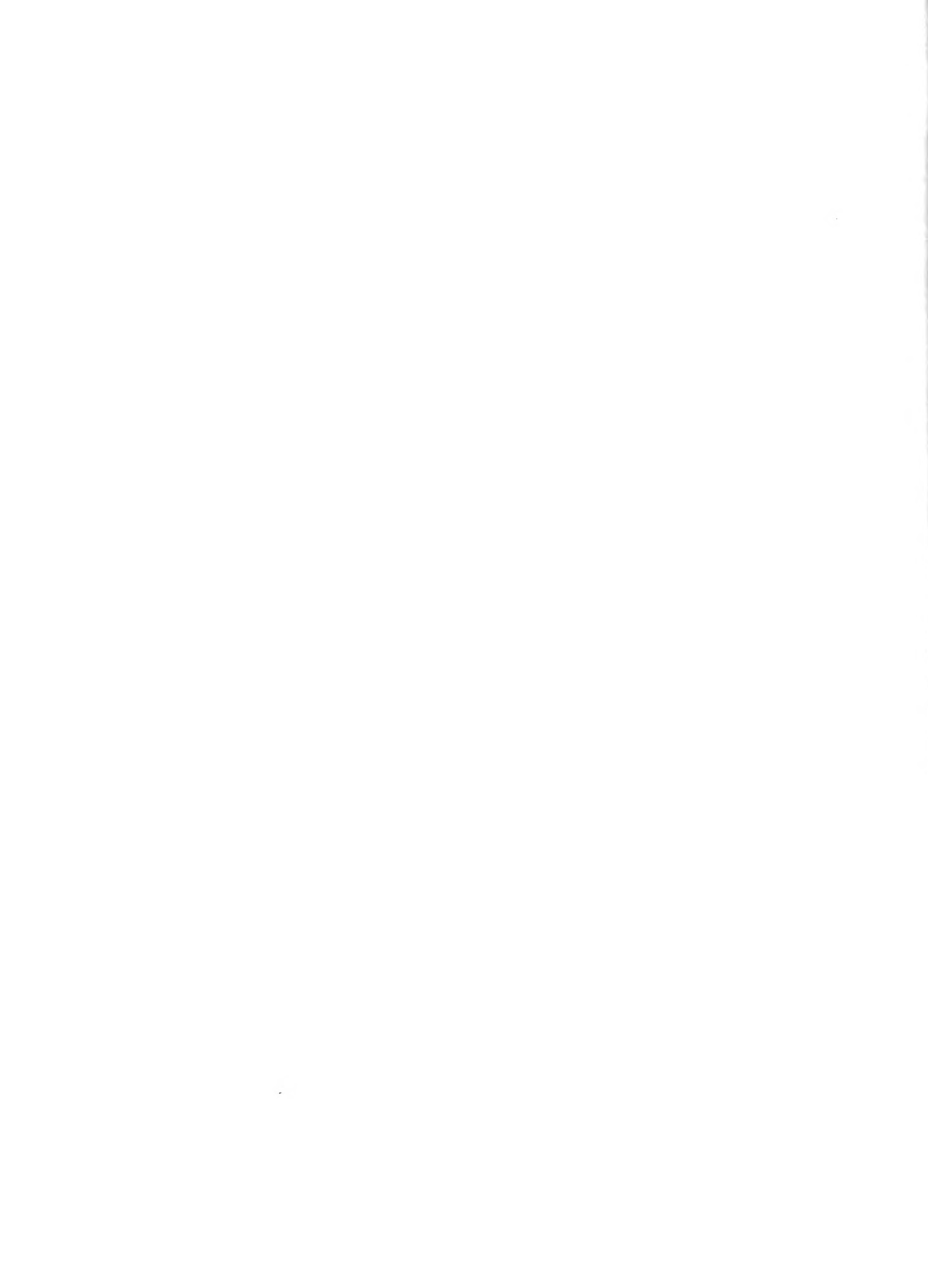


Illustration from SOM study showing public improvements on Franklin Street.



- g. The surface cleaning of structures shall be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that will damage the historic building materials shall not be undertaken.
- h. Every reasonable effort shall be made to protect and preserve archaeological resources affected by or adjacent to any rehabilitation project.
- i. Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties shall not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural or cultural material, and such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the property, neighborhood or environment.
- j. Wherever possible, new additions or alterations to structure shall be done in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the structure would be unimpaired.

3. New Construction on Small Individual Parcels

Although the intent is to retain buildings within the District and to rehabilitate them, certain sites will provide opportunity for new construction through replacement or infill construction. While good



Summer Street at Church Green, showing infill construction and contemporary mansard replacement.

contemporary design is encouraged, the design of these new buildings in the district must reinforce the scale and appearance of the area. The most critical elements of the design, in this respect are:

a. Massing

The height and total square footage of new buildings must closely match those of existing buildings within the area. If any square footage is sought in excess of that which would produce a building that matches the height of the District, it should be allowed only when there is an opportunity to locate the additional bulk so that there is no negative impact on the district as seen from within the district. This means that the higher portion of the building must visually disengage from the lower portion and be easily distinguished from it. Sight line studies are needed to determine how much additional mass can be accommodated for any open parcel.

b. Definition of the Street

New buildings must adhere to the predominant alignment of buildings on the street.

c. Materials

The material of the new building must match one of the predominant building materials in the District as closely as possible. Contemporary building practices generally undermine attempts to duplicate earlier construction exactly and, therefore, the selection and detailing of the material should evoke the appearance of the existing buildings.

d. Articulation

The arrangement of the various elements of the building - opaque materials, windows, structure overhangs, details, ornamentation, etc., - must be handled in such a way that the image of a masonry building with punched windows is projected. The elements should be arranged formally with sufficient repetition and variations in light and shadow to make them as interesting and as compatible with their abutters as possible.

e. Fenestration

The arrangement of the window and their size should reinforce the human scale of the District. Rectangular windows with a vertical aspect which can be related to existing, original windows in size are encouraged. The image of a masonry building with punched windows does not allow strip windows.

4. Major New Construction Affecting the District

In general, major new construction adjacent to the district should be designed to be compatible with and enhance the overall character of the district. Such development should adhere to the following general guidelines:

a. Massing

Abrupt transitions in scale should be avoided. New development should incorporate transitional elements reflecting the cornice heights of adjacent buildings.

b. Definition of the Street

The design of major new projects should help to define adjacent areas and reinforce the shape of the street. Unusually shaped buildings should be avoided.

c. Other Elements of Relatedness

Facade treatment should enhance surroundings and reinforce the character of the district by the use of compatible materials, scale elements (windows, entrances, shop fronts) and details.

5. Two sites adjacent to the district are considered to be significant impact areas because of the effect new construction is likely to have on the visual identity of the Commercial Palace District. The concerns are almost exclusively with the way the edges of these sites are treated in relation to the district. These sites are:

a. Winthrop Garage Area

The area bounded by Devonshire, Summer, Fédéral and High Streets has already undergone significant development which has had a non-contributing impact on the Commercial Palace District, notably the erection of the Blue Cross/Blue Shield Building at 100 Summer Street. The dramatic change in height and material is disruptive to the containment and cohesiveness of Summer Street, and seriously erodes the integrity of Church Green. The failure to maintain the street-edge along Summer Street results in awkward open spaces which not only destroy the container of Church Green

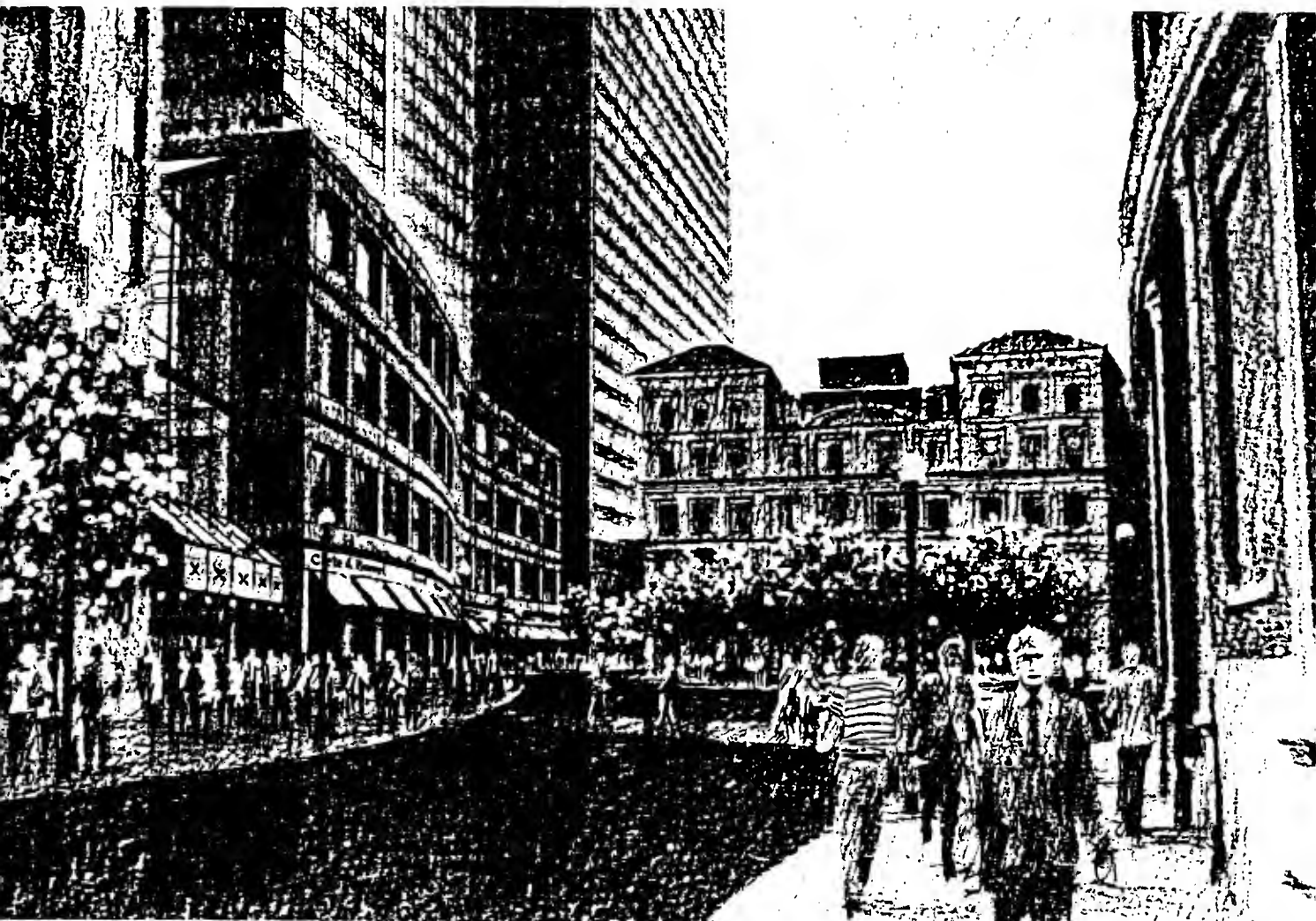


Illustration from SOM study showing public improvements at Winthrop Square.



but expose unsightly and non-contributory endwalls. These irregular open areas will complicate future attempts to knit the fabric of the block together and reinforce the character of the district and the downtown. The following suggestions for future development in this area are intended to minimize the negative impact that new construction can have:

- o build a low-rise element, 4-6 stories, directly on the property line along Devonshire Street, (see "Snow Place extension" below).
- o set any higher elements back no less than 50' from Devonshire Street to reinforce the cornice line of district and allow vista of 75 Franklin Street - a landmark structure - from Summer Street.
- o use punched masonry in a highly modeled and articulated design for the facade of the low-rise element.
- o design any pedestrian space adjacent to 109 Franklin Street to evoke the scale of Snow Place, which it in fact extends, and to actively support and enliven the exposed wall of the existing building.
- o locate service areas on interior courts which are accessed from existing curb cuts along Federal Street. There should be no service or vehicular entrances from Devonshire Street to reinforce the pedestrian potential of Winthrop Square.

b. Kingston Garage Area

The area bounded by Kingston, Bedford, Lincoln and a realigned-Essex Street contains vacant land and a city-owned garage and two existing buildings. This area directly abuts the Bedford Building, across Lincoln Street, which is a significant building within the district: it is the relationship to this building, and to Bedford Street that is critical if new development is to reinforce the character of the district. The following suggestions are made in that respect:

- o restrict the cornice height of any new building to 6 floors along Bedford and that portion of Lincoln along side the Bedford building, although a higher building set back 25' would be acceptable.
- o the full width of Lincoln Street should be maintained as open space even if the street, as such, is discontinued to preserve the setting for the Bedford Building
- o alignment along the street edge is desirable along Bedford and Kingston although not essential.

In both areas, it is critical that the material of the new construction blend with the predominant masonry materials traditional to the area. This will require careful coloring and scaling of materials to prevent abrasive contrast such as that of the tower at 100 Summer Street.

6. Signage

All signs should normally conform to the City of Boston Sign Code; however, historic photographs indicate signs were used, particularly on upper floors, in excess of the current limits and design controls. A specific set of sign guidelines should be prepared which acknowledges this historic appearance and also incorporates contemporary style and capability; these guidelines should be integral to the CARD process and design review should be clearly administered by the staff of the Redevelopment Authority in conjunction with the Boston Landmarks Commission. These guidelines should address at least:

- a. Materials which are allowed. Signs that evoke historic locations and forms must employ the materials which would have been used. Contemporary signs may use any accepted material.
- b. Placement on or within the building. Documentation of earlier signage may be provided to defend unusual locations and sign techniques which reinforce the historic character of the buildings. Signs with no such precedent shall be located in such a way as to not block architectural features of the building from public view.
- c. Lighting. Signs which use historic precedent for their design must be lighted with concealed sources. Contemporary designs may employ internal lighting provided the opaque portion,

preferably the background, is significantly larger. Neon is acceptable provided the location and intensity is controlled so that it can only be seen from in front of the building on which it is used.

It should be the intent of these guidelines to make the signage compatible with the style and appearance of the building insofar as possible.

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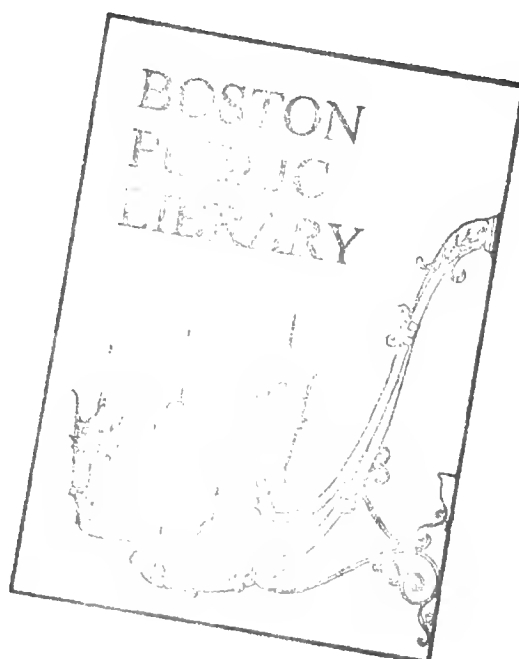
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Appendix

COMMERCIAL PALACE

DISTRICT



100-100-100

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INTRODUCTION

The following material summarizes the significance of each building that forms the Commercial Palace District. The summaries come from a systematic building-by-building survey and inventory completed by the Boston Landmarks Commission in 1980. Field survey, documentary research, and evaluation of significance was completed for each of the 788 structures existing in the Central Business District. The evaluation criteria include relative architectural and historical significance, intact quality, and importance to the streetscape; as such the criteria address both individual and collective significance.

22-40 (38) Chauncy Street

Notable

Charles Chauncy Building

1924

Architect unknown

George W. Harvey Co., builder

This is a late example of the classical designs popular for skyscrapers and office buildings from the 1890s through the 1920s in Boston. The steel frame is disguised by a Renaissance Revival overlay in cast stone. The plan is a "U" and there is a setback at the top. Such historicism in architectural design disappeared when building resumed after the Depression, and International Style designs created curtain walls over simple rectangular frames. Tenants in 1930 were mixed, with dozens of wholesale dry goods and clothing dealers here at the edge of the textile district. This building makes a good contribution to its setting.

42-48 Chauncy Street

Notable

Boston Edison Substation

1917

Bigelow & Wadsworth, architects

George W. Harvey Co., builder

The Edison Electric Illuminating Company commissioned a specialized industrial facility here which harmonizes with the downtown setting. Although the shaft of the transformer station is windowless, it features an attractive brick lattice-work pattern. The metal doors and crowning arcade provide equally handsome base and crowning elements.

Bigelow & Wadsworth, plus its successor, Bigelow, Wadsworth, Hubbard & Smith; and its predecessors (see 431-439 Washington Street) were popular Boston architects for many years. Their work for the Edison Illuminating Company includes office buildings at 25-29 Boylston Street (1906, 1922 addition), 180-182 Tremont (1929-1931), and another transformer station at 7-74 Charles Street South (1923).

52-56 Chauncy Street and

Minor

72-76 Bedford Street

Harvey Building

1915

Clinton J. Warren, architect

George W. Harvey Company, builder

In design, this is a utilitarian commercial building of 11 stories. The pier and spandrel form has a cast stone base and tan brick shaft, terminating with a plain band at the top. George W. Harvey was the owner. By 1930, tenants were virtually all dry goods and clothing dealers, manufacturers' agents, and carpet dealers. Architect Clinton J. Warren's other standing downtown works are the Wendell Phillips Office Building (115-117 Chauncy Street), the Unity Building (177-195 Devonshire), and Fidelity Trust Company (144-148 State Street). Significance is attached to the building solely for its role as a background architecture in the downtown area.

26-38 Summer Street and

Significant

84-88 Hawley Street

Corner of Snow Place

Kennedy's (formerly) Emerson & Fehmer, architects

1873-1874

Architect unknown

This post-fire "commercial palace" remains as one of the downtown's most elaborate examples of the Panel Brick style. It is also the western anchor to a row of post-fire commercial palaces along Summer Street. The Summer and Hawley Street facades have heavily articulated surfaces expressed in finely-crafted brick, terra cotta, and sandstone.

From 1874 into the 1890s, the major tenant was Isaac Fenno & Co., manufacturer and dealer in men's and boys' clothing. The firm invented the Fenno cloth cutter which reportedly could cut 1,000 to 3,000 garments in a day. Other tenants at the time also were associated with the dry goods and clothing industry. The most recent occupant, Kennedy's Department Store, has vacated Boston and left modern showcase windows on the streelevel of this structure. Although it is not part of downtown activity at present, the building contributes heavily to the streetscape. It is part of the suggested Commercial Palace National Register District. A plaque identifies this as the site where the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) was founded, in 1865.

40-46 Summer Street

Major Significance

1873-1874

Charles Kirby, architect

Only six cast iron fronted buildings remain in the downtown. This is one of the few which are largely intact, and it has the best design in the High Victorian Italianate style. Cast iron was never a common building material here as it was in New York. Most intact aside from this front are 120 Fulton Street, the McLaughlin Building, and 112-116 State Street, the Richards Building. Erected in the 1850s, those fronts exemplify the earlier Renaissance Revival style.

In 1877, tenants here were manufacturers and jobbers in textile and clothing-related companies. Today, this building is an important part of the downtown fabric. It is recommended for designation as a Boston City Landmark and it is part of the suggested Commercial Palace National Register District.

48-50 Summer Street and

Unrated

113-115 Arch Street

Union Warren Savings Bank

1975-1976

Sasaki Associates, architects

John Morrison, builder

Buildings like this are attempting to lure shoppers back downtown by adopting the shopping center image. However, they lack the urban pizzazz that provides a real alternative to suburban shopping.

52-56 Summer Street

Non-Contributing

Corner of Arch Street

1955

Sumner Schein, architect

Hew Construction Co., builder

The height of 4 stories is fine for the blockface, but otherwise this building design is all wrong. The mode is 1950s shopping center vernacular with few windows above the storefronts and two-toned pink granite sheathing. It is an unhappy standout in a post-fire row on Summer Street.

58-60 Summer Street

Notable

c. 1873-1875

Architect unknown

Summer Street's post-fire character is represented here in granite, in the High Victorian Italianate style. The original design is only visible now at the two upper stories. Typically for the area, early occupants of the building were related to the textile and clothing industries. This building is located in the suggested Church Green National Register District.

62-64 Summer Street and

Significant

37-41 Otis Street

1873-1874

Attributed to Emerson & Fehmer, architects

A trio of Neo-Grec stone buildings stands at this intersection, all attributed to Emerson & Fehmer. Each one, 62-64, 66-72, and 83-87 Summer Street, is notable individually for its design clarity. Together they form an important stylistic ensemble within the "commercial palace" row.

William Ralph Emerson (1833-1918) and Carl Fehmer (b.1835) were both distinguished Boston architects and founding members of the Boston Society of Architects. Together they designed the nearby Beebe-Weld Building, now called One Winthrop Square. Emerson later became a noted Shingle Style designer of ample residences. Fehmer may have been largely responsible for the firm's commercial commissions. Also, his German origin may have exposed him to the Neo-Grec style which was popular abroad. The attribution of the Summer Street buildings is based on a plate published in American Architect and Building News in July 1877 for "Details of Stores on Kingston Street and on Chauncy and Summer Streets".

In 1877, tenants included a jobber of gent's furnishing goods, a necktie manufacturer, and an overall cutter. Both 62-64 and 66-72 Summer Street were originally owned by brothers, John J. Franklin and J. Warren Faxon, and are inscribed with the letter "F". This building is located within the suggested Church Green National Register District.

66-72 Summer Street and

Significant

38-50 Otis Street

c. 1872-1877

Attributed to Emerson & Fehmer, architects

This is one in the trio of Neo-Grec stone buildings located at this intersection, all attributed to William Ralph Emerson and Carl Fehmer. Each, 62-64, 66-72 and 83-87 Summer Street, is notable individually for its design clarity. Together they form an important stylistic ensemble within the "commercial palace" row. This building is located in the suggested Church Green National Register District.

Emerson and Fehmer are further mentioned under 62-64 Summer Street and One Winthrop Square. The attribution of the Summer Street buildings is based on a plate published in American Architect and Building News in July 1877 for "Details of Stores on Kingston Street and on Chauncy and Summer Streets".

In 1877, occupants were clothing jobbers and manufacturers. Both 62-64 and 66-72 Summer Street were originally owned by three Faxon brothers, hence the inscribed "F".

74-78 Summer Street

Notable

c. 1873-1877

Architect unknown, not George Pope

Summer Street benefited visually from the effects of the Great Fire of 1872, redeveloped with its handsome harmonious row of post-fire "commercial palaces". This one is a marble clad 6-story anchor at the eastern end of three 4-story granite buildings. In style, 74-78 Summer Street combines elements of the High Victorian Italianate and Neo-Grec modes. Levels two and three represent a c. 1900 iron storefront alteration. The sixth floor is an addition.

Two clothing-related jobbers were located here in 1877. In the early 1800s, a number of wholesale boot and shoe dealers were occupants, reflecting the expansion of this important trade into the Church Green area. At sometime after the turn of the century, this was called the Traveler Building. It is located in the suggested Church Green National Register District.

80-82 Summer Street

Minor

1927 facade

John C. Spofford, architect (1927)

Classical and Gothic elements are combined in this pier and spandrel cast stone facade. The 5-story building dates from the 19th century, and the present 20th century facade harmonizes with the streetscape in height and rhythm. John C. Spofford (b. 1854) practiced with Charles Brigham for several decades. This building is located within the suggested Church Green National Register District.

84 Summer Street

Non-Contributing*

Corner of Devonshire Street

Unrated*

Justin Case Shoes

1975-1976

Seavor Associates, architects

With all the post-fire buildings in the area, Summer Street's modern commercial architecture fares poorly. This 1-story corner structure with a wrap-around band of plate glass windows is at odds with its larger-scaled urban setting. It is located within the suggested Church Green National Register District and was originally built to house a bank branch.

55-69 Summer Street

Unrated

11-17 Kingston Street and

4-20 Chauncy Street

Charlestown Savings Bank

1974

The Architects Collaborative, architects

Vappi & Co., Inc., builders

The Architects Collaborative (TAC) is a firm founded by Walter Gropius in Cambridge when he was head of Harvard's architectural school. True to its Bauhaus heritage, TAC has created the upper stories of this building in pure Miesian skeletal form. Notable features include the angled siting, plaza with trees, and granite clad base.

71-73 Summer Street

Notable

c. 1873-1877

George W. Pope, architect

This Italianate facade, remaining above the altered base, is a section of a larger cast iron mercantile block. It was originally owned by Jacob Sleeper, one of the founders and benefactors of Boston University. Not as popular in Boston as the material was in New York, this is one of only six cast iron facades left in the downtown. Originally, the tenants were jobbers in the clothing industry. Later tenants included a trunk company and two umbrella enterprises. Even altered this building contributes to the post-fire character of Summer Street. It is located within the suggested Church Green National Register District.



75-81 Summer Street and

Notable

1-5 Kingston Street

Merchants Building

1901

Arthur H. Bowditch, architect

George A. Fuller Co., builder

Retail clothing businesses were located on this building's lower floors, plus Sages Trunk Depot, a leading luggage store established in 1876. Upper floors were rented for office or for wholesale and retail dry goods activities.

Arthur Bowditch favored Beaux Arts classical styling for his commercial designs. This one is clad in tan brick, heavily ornamented with tan terra cotta. Among the prolific architect's other downtown designs are the Old South Building, Washington-Essex Building (formerly Siegel's Department Store) and Paramount Theatre. Also see 687-689 Atlantic Avenue, the Essex Hotel. Later and larger than its post-fire neighbors, this building is fitting as turn-of-the-century downtown architecture. It is located within the suggested Church Green National Register District.

83-87 Summer Street and

Significant

8-12 Kingston Street

1877-1878

Attributed to Emerson & Fehmer, architects

This building is the southern member of a trio of Neo-Grec stone buildings located at the intersection of Summer, Otis and Kingston Streets. It is the only one of marble, both 62-64 and 66-72 Summer Street being clad in granite. Like the others, it is notable as an individual design and one attributed to Emerson & Fehmer. Together the three form an important stylistic ensemble within the "commercial palace" row. This building is located within the suggested Church Green National Register District.

At the time of the blaze, 87 Summer Street was owned by William C. Tebbetts. His dry goods firm of Tebbetts, Baldwin & Davis occupied the first floor. After the fire, Tebbetts and another partner, Charles Haley, built this impressive marble edifice. Beginning in 1878, the building was occupied by the Pope Manufacturing Co. for its first bicycle salesroom and riding school (to 1881). Merchant Albert Augustus Pope made Columbia bicycles and is considered to be the founder of the American bicycle industry. The Massachusetts Bicycle Club was founded by him at 87 Summer Street in 1879.

Emerson & Fehmer are discussed further under 62-64 Summer Street and One Winthrop Square. Attribution of the Summer Street buildings is based on a plate published in American Architect and Building News in July 1877 for "Details of Stores on Kingston Street and on Chauncy and Summer Streets".

89-91 and 93-95 Summer Street

Significant

1873-1874

Architect unknown

Edward Ripley and Albert Rhodes, manufacturers and jobbers of clothing, built this building after the Great Fire of 1872. Their partnership dated back to 1856 and was reported to be the second oldest in that trade in Boston. Tenants in 1877 were all involved in the production or sale of dry goods.

The base of this granite clad, Italianate/Neo-Grec styled structure is the original cast iron, obscured but possibly largely intact. The fifth story is clad in pressed metal which is designed and painted to simulate the granite below. This is actually a pair of commercial loft structures divided by an interior bearing wall intended to check the spread of fire. Much of the inside detailing remains intact.

The building is similar in style to 101-103 and 74-78 Summer Street. The finely detailed well-preserved design is integral to the "commercial palace" post-fire character of Summer Street. This building is located within the suggested Church Green National Register District.

101-103 Summer Street through to
136 Bedford Street
c. 1873-1877
George W. Pope, architect

Notable

Next to 89-91 and 93-95 Summer Street is this similarly designed granite clad Italianate/Neo-Grec styled building. The base is cast iron and the top floor galvanized iron pressed to simulate stone. The building has an almost identical facade on Bedford Street.

Tenants in 1877 were typically associated with the shoe and clothing trades. Deed research shows that a recent attribution of the design to N.J. Bradlee is a case of mistaken addressses. Still, this anonymous building is integral to the post-fire character of Summer Street. It has received designation as a Boston City Landmark. The building is located in the suggested Church Green National Register District. It is currently undergoing rehabilitation for retail/office space.

105-113 Summer Street and

Major Significance

140-144 Bedford Street

Church Green Building

c. 1873-1874

Emerson & Fehmer, architects

The Church Green Building is one of the finest granite, post-fire buildings remaining downtown. Its significance is enhanced by siting on an entire block near the eastern entrance to the Summer Street corridor of "commercial palaces". With dressed facades on two other streets as well, the structure is highly visible from the expressway and the South Station area.

From 1877 to 1883, the Church Green Building held the headquarters of the New England Shoe and Leather Manufacturers' and Dealers' Association. Highly influential, the trade organization provided meeting rooms, maintained a credit information bureau, and investigated business failures. In 1880, the building also housed several dry goods merchants and the Freeman's National Bank. In 1890, Joseph P. Tolton established an office here for a business that manufactured shoe and leather machinery and shipped it world-wide.

Erected by William Faxon and Charles Elm directly after the Great Fire, the building is named for its predecessor on the site, the New South Meeting House. That was Charles Bulfinch's famous Octagon Church design of 1814, razed in 1868 when the influx of commercial activity had displaced early residents of the area. The main facades of the present building are granite and the rear ones are brick.

The exemplary Neo-Grec academic design, produced on this imposing free standing structure, has been attributed to various architects. Evidence suggests that either Johnathan Preston or his son, William Gibbons Preston, could have been responsible. Emerson & Fehmer have also been named as a possibility. William Ralph Emerson worked in Preston's office in the 1860s, and this building is similar in design to those attributed to his partnership with Carl Fehmer at 62-64, 66-72, and 83-87 Summer Street.

The Church Green Building has been recommended for study as a potential Boston City Landmark. Currently, the building is being rehabilitated for street level stores and offices above. It is a major element in the suggested Church Green National Register District.

115-117 Summer Street and

Significant

10-14 Lincoln Street

c. 1873-1875

Architect unknown

This building occupies a crucial corner at 115-117 Summer Street and 10-14 Lincoln Street. On its own, it is a standout sandstone post-fire design with a medievalized Gothic/Chateausque character that is unique in the area. Its significance is substantially heightened by siting across from two other major historic edifices, the Bedford and Church Green Buildings. It is located in the suggested Church Green National Register District.

Among the 1875 tenants were three wholesale boot and shoe dealers. In 1877, the Collateral Loan Co. had offices and storage for mortgaged goods on floors two through five. In 1880, the National Sewing Machine Co. was housed here, manufacturers of wax thread machines to stitch boots and shoes.

119-121 Summer Street and

Notable

16 Lincoln Street

c. 1873-1875

Architect unknown

This "L"-shaped building faces Summer and Lincoln Streets and contributes significantly to the low-scale post-fire character of the Church Green area. The cladding is marble, detailed in the Neo-Grec mode. Cast iron storefronts appear to be later in date. The building is located within the suggested Church Green National Register District.

Like neighboring buildings along Summer Street and around Church Green, this one housed activities associated with the shoe and leather industry and it also contained one woolen dealer. The offices of the Corrugated Wire Fastening Co. at this address (1880) represented the manufacturer of machines for fastening uppers to soles of boots and shoes.

123-29 Summer Street

Non-Contributing

1940, present facade

E.F. Tomlinson, Inc.; architect/builder (1940)

A 2-story structure with modern show windows is all that remains here of an earlier 5-story building. Visually, it detracts from the character of the post-fire Church Green area but is located within the boundaries of the suggested Church Green National Register District.

131-135 Summer Street

Significant

c. 1873-1877

Architect unknown

Since its construction this building has been integral to the history and urban character of the Church Green area. Originally numbered 129-131 Summer Street, the early tenants were associated with leather, boots and shoes. Power for the sewing machines of occupant Braddock and Smith, a maker of overgaiters and vests, came from an adjoining building. Italianate and Neo-Grec motifs are combined in the marble, granite, and cast iron facade. The design is still substantially intact and the building is located in the suggested Church Green National Register District.

137-139 Summer Street and

Significant

11 South Street

c. 1873-1877

Attributed to Ware & Van Brunt, architects

With 26-38 Summer Street, the former Kennedy's store, this is an outstanding Panel Brick style structure and one which anchors the post-fire corridor of Summer Street. It is located at the prominent northeast corner of the Church Green area as well, within the suggested Church Green National Register District.

At the time of the fire of 1872, Joseph P. Cooke, owner of the property, had hired architects, Ware & Van Brunt to design a brick and granite warehouse for Boyd, Corey and Ahl, shoe dealers. This building, inscribed with the initials "JPC", could easily be the same design. Typically, early tenants (1877) were all related to the boot and shoe trade, including Boyd, Corey & Co. The half-timbered storefront is a fairly recent alteration.

Architect William Ware (1832-1915) organized the first American school of architecture at MIT. Later he founded the Columbia School of Architecture. He is considered the first professor of architecture in this country. Henry Van Brunt (1832-1903) was one of the organizers of the Boston Society of Architects and one of the early members of the American Institute of Architects. Among the firm's national works are Memorial Hall and the Episcopal Seminary in Cambridge.

13-23 South Street

Non-Contributing

1928

Samuel D. Kelley, architect

Lawson W. Oaks, Inc.; builder

In size, this building complements its handsome neighbor at 11 South Street. Otherwise, 13-23 South Street is a partially remodeled design, with a facade layered in red and yellow brick, surmounted by an awkward parapet.

1-11 Otis Street

Significant

Corner of Snow Place

c. 1873-1875

Architect unknown

A well-detailed and largely intact 5-story Neo-Grec style building, 1-11 Otis Street is particularly important as a complement to the adjacent One Winthrop Square building and park.

Typically, this building was originally associated with the dry goods trade, like so many of the structures in this area built just after the Great Fire of 1872. Early tenants included jobbers of neckwear; jobbers of hats, caps, furs and straw goods; and commission dry goods merchants.

The sandstone of 1-11 Otis Street is now painted white; the storefronts are modern but some original cast iron piers remain. The building is part of the suggested Commercial Palace National Register District.

78-82 Bedford Street

Non-Contributing

1937

Homer Keissling, architect

George B.H. Macomber, builder

A curved facade banded in show windows and black panels describes this two-story International Style building. Although this modern style originated in Europe around the 1920s, it only became established in America in the late 1930s and didn't really become popular until after World War II. Along with the excitement of structurally free curtain wall construction, the International Style cultivated a sense of separation from its setting. Here, attached to a wall of earlier, taller, eclectic buildings the result is unsettling.

86-88 Bedford Street

Notable

1890

Lewis & Phipps, architects

Charles R. Morgan, builder

This building terminates a row of nine 19th century commercial structures which stretches harmoniously along Kingston and around to Bedford Street. It is also one of four contiguous brick structures erected just after the City widened the intersections of Bedford and Kingston in 1890, following a fire on Thanksgiving Day of the previous year.

The design is Richardsonian Romanesque in style, executed in brick (painted) with brownstone trim. Originally it was owned by a physician, David W. Cheever. Architect G. Wilton Lewis was born in New York state in 1845 and opened an office in Boston in 1872. Sanford Phipps was a native of Massachusetts who started in practice in 1881. Phipps worked with Lewis in the late 1880s. After that, he practiced with George F. Loring, designing such buildings as the Masonic Temple at Boylston and Tremont Streets, the Somerville Public Library, and Divinity Hall at Tufts. This building is part of the suggested Church Green National Register District.

90-92 Bedford Street and

Notable

47 Kingston Street

1890

W.F. Goodwin, architect

Emery & Stuart, builders

Mainly, 90-92 Bedford is significant as the corner, swing element in a row of nine similarly scaled and styled buildings on Kingston and Bedford Streets across from the Proctor Building. It is also one of four contiguous buildings erected just after the City widened this intersection in 1890 subsequent to a fire on Thanksgiving Day in 1889.

The Panel Brick Victorian commercial design is red brick with brownstone trim, now painted over. As with most of its neighbors, the original storefront is largely intact. W.F. Goodwin also designed 76-86 South Street. This building is located within the suggested Church Green National Register District.

100-106 Bedford Street

Major Significance

Corner of Kingston Street

Proctor Building

1896-1897

Winslow & Wetherell, architects

James Smith, builder

Called "a piece of urban jewelery", the Proctor Building is a decorated terra cotta, copper crested dazzler. For downtown Boston, it is small and unusually ornate, and it takes full advantage of a highly visible triangular corner site.

Unusual, too, is the choice of high relief Spanish Renaissance-inspired ornamentation. Specific reference seems to have come from plates in a recently published book called Renaissance Architecture and Ornament in Spain (by Andrew N. Prentice). Often times innovative architects, including Robert Adam, Thomas Jefferson, and H.H. Richardson, borrowed design elements from antiquity. Winslow & Wetherell thus were able to combine a Renaissance style with twenty years of terra cotta technology, expressing a design that would have been prohibitively expensive to produce in stone. The high relief copper cresting represents the late 19th century high technology of pressed sheet metal ornament. For information on these well-respected and productive architects, see 118-122 Tremont Street.

Originally the building was owned by the estate of Thomas E. Proctor who had been a prominent Boston leather merchant. Beginning in 1903, the first floor was leased by the United Cigar Stores Co. U.S. Cigar opened twelve

shops that year on its way to becoming the world's largest retail cigar dealer. Also in 1903, the second floor was used for a hat bleachery. By the 1920s, 100 Bedford housed the Triangle Cigar Store. The Proctor Building has been recommended for designation as a Boston City Landmarks. It is part of the suggested Church Green National Register District.

108-110 Bedford Street through to

Non-Contributing

28-30 Kingston Street

c. 1960s-1970s, present facade

Gazing from the adjacent Proctor Building to this 1-story brick storefront is quite jarring. But then that urban gem now sports an equally silly storefront. This building is located within the suggested Church Green National Register District.

89-103 Bedford Street and

Major Significance

17 Lincoln Street

Corner of Columbia Street

Bedford Building

1874-1876

Cummings & Sears, architects

Nothing was spared outside or within to make the Bedford Building one of Boston's finest. Among post-fire structure it was particularly large and prominently sited. For the first time in Boston, red granite from New Brunswick was employed, along with white Vermont marble, terra cotta, and Philadelphia brick. The combination was crafted to create an outstanding design in the polychromatic, High Victorian Gothic style. On the interior party walls divide the space into four stores in accord with new building code fire prevention regulations.

Henry and Francis L. Lee, members of a wealthy Boston merchant family, were the original owners of the Bedford Building. Located at the junction of the shoe and leather and dry goods districts, the building's early occupants represented both trades.

Architects Charles A. Cummings (1833-1906) and Willard T. Sears (1837-1920) were partners from 1870 to 1889. Cummings studied at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York. Both he and Sears worked in the office of Gridley J. F. Bryant. They executed many public and residential buildings, but only two of their downtown works are known to remain: here and at

72-74 Franklin Street. Other important buildings by these architects are the New Old South Church at Dartmouth and Boylston Streets in the Back Bay and the South End Cyclorama. Cummings was also distinguished as a scholar and author.

The Bedford Building is individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Currently it is being renovated as office space. The particular importance of this "commerical palace" is enhanced by its location at a major intersection in the Church Green area.

100-106 Arch Street through to

Minor

21-25 Otis Street

St. Anthony's Shrine and The Workers Chapel

1952-1955

Maurice A. Reidy, engineer

Thomas O'Connor & Co., Inc., builder

The Arch Street Shrine contains church and monastery facilities behind its modern facade. Brick is the dominant wall material with stone trim. There is a rear facade on Otis. The building style contrasts sharply with "commercial palaces" in the area, notably the adjacent One Winthrop Square building. However, 100-106 Arch Street maintains some harmony with its older neighbors in terms of height and materials.

91-101 Arch Street

Significant

Corner of Snow Place and Bussey Place

1873-1874

Architect unknown

The President and Fellows of Harvard College erected this stone and brick clad commercial building. Originally, two tenants filled it: Barnes & Ward Co., jobbers of woolens, and Leland, Rice & Co., jobbers of ready-made clothing. Like the Bedford Building, this is a finely detailed example of the polychromatic High Victorian Gothic style. It is part of the suggested Commercial Palace National Register District.

105-111 Arch Street

Significant

Corner of Bussey Place

1873-1875

Charles K. Kirby, architect

Nathaniel Adams, builder

The brick cornice of this Panel Brick style building has been hidden by aluminum covering, but the cast iron storefront piers remain in place. In between is a rhythmically articulated facade with High Victorian surface enrichment. Early tenants were largely associated with textile and clothing activities. Architect Charles Kirby practiced in Boston from the 1850s into the 1870s. For a time he was senior partner in the firm of Kirby & Lewis. Apparently they mainly designed residences in the Back Bay. This building is part of the suggested Commercial Palace National Register District.

Bussey Place

Notable

c. 1873-1880

Architect unknown

This dignified pair of utilitarian warehouse-type buildings is largely intact, even at sidewalk level. However, location on a dead-end alley diminishes the streetscape value of these structures. These may have been erected in 1873 as the rear entrance to 40-46 Summer Street, or they may be linked to a building permit dated 1880 for the construction of a single 5-story warehouse by David H. Jacobs & Son for Charles G. Chase. They are located within the suggested Commercial Palace National Register District.

20 Lincoln Street

Minor

c. 1910-1920

Architect unknown

Below Church Green is this red brick building trimmed with white stone and cast stone. It is a harmonious background building in a row of similarly-scaled structures on Lincoln Street and it is located within the suggested Church Green National Register District.

22-24 and 26-32 Lincoln Street

Notable

1885

George W. Pope, architect/builder

After the Great Fire of 1872, the Church Green area was connected with the manufacture of boots and shoes for several decades. In 1887, this building housed the offices of the Flexible Shoe Nail Co. and the Dodge Trimmer Co., manufacturers of shoe nailing and edge trimming equipment.

In style, this building is connected to the Neo-Grec post-fire structures that predominate in the Church Green area. It is a late example of the mode, but one well-executed in sandstone. Its location is important at the southern end of the Church Green area, near the expressway. It is part of the suggested Church Green National Register District. George W. Pope was active in architecture from about 1870 to 1890. He designed other buildings in the area including 43-45 Purchase Street and 115-119 Pearl Street.

19-21 Kingston Street

Significant

c. 1873-1877

Architect unknown

From near its Summer Street beginning, Kingston Street marches south with a row of nine harmonious late 19th century buildings. All are of masonry construction and of 4 to 6 stories in a vocabulary of eclectic styles. First in the row, this structure is notable for its Neo-Grec sandstone clad facade and its well-preserved storefront. As with other Kingston Street buildings, many early tenants at No. 19-21 were involved in the dry goods trade, often as importers and jobbers of clothing. Historic photos show that there was an identical building to the north of this one. Originally, the owners for this building were the heirs of Issaac Atkins. This building is part of the suggested Church Green National Register District.

23-25 Kingston Street

Significant

c. 1873-1875

Architect unknown

Neo-Grec and Panel Brick styling are combined in the red brick and white stone facade of this building. Second from the north end of a Kingston/Bedford Street row of nine post-fire commercial buildings, No. 23-25 is notable for its crisp details and color combination. A dry goods jobber was the 1875 tenant. In 1877, occupants were dry goods and hosiery-related. Early 20th century photos show that the cornice was surmounted with a central semi-circular pediment and a finial. All of the buildings in this row owe some of their significance to the grouping of the nine contiguous structures. This building is part of the suggested Church Green National Register District.

27-29 Kingston Street

Significant

1878

Architect unknown

J. & H.M. Harmon, builders

Probably builder-designed, this is a sophisticated and well-crafted building of Neo-Grec styling with a sandstone facade. It was built for property owner Samuel Payson, a commission merchant in the nearby Church Green building. Among the 1880 tenants here was a wholesale dry goods commission merchant. This building gains importance from its position within a row of nine post-fire commercial buildings. It is also part of the suggested Church Green National Register District.

31-33 and 35-37 Kingston Street

Significant

1875

Calvin Ryder, architect

William Sayward, builder

These twin structures are finely detailed sandstone clad buildings with Neo-Grec/Italianate styling. Their particular significance pertains to their central location in the Kingston/Bedford row of nine post-fire commercial buildings. Originally, this property was numbered 23 and 25 Kingston Street (changed by 1883). Early tenants were dry goods-related manufacturers and dealers. That, of course, was a general activity in the Church Green area, along with leather-related commerce. The two buildings were erected by different owners. Calvin Ryder was a Boston architect who is little known today except for this pair of Kingston Street buildings. As a student Charles Brigham, later of Sturgis & Brigham, worked in Ryder's office. These buildings are located within the suggested Church Green National Register District.

39-41 Kingston Street

Notable

1890

Peabody & Stearns, architects

D.H. Jacob & Son, builders

Designed by the respected and productive firm of Peabody & Stearns, this building is important for its place in a row of nine post-fire commercial buildings. It is contemporary with 43-45 Kingston, and 86-88 and 90-92 Bedford Streets. All four were erected just after the City widened the intersection at Kingston and Bedford, after a fire in 1889 destroyed the existing structures. The Romanesque Revival style building, in yellow brick with sandstone trim, was built for L.A. Williams. Presumably, the early tenants here were related to the dry goods and clothing industry as they were, generally in the area. This building is located within the suggested Church Green National Register District. The party wall between 39-41 and 43-45 Kingston Street may survive from an earlier building on the site.

43-45 Kingston Street

Notable

1890

Benjamin F. Dwight, architect

Emery & Stuart, builders

Although this is his only known remaining downtown building, B.F. Dwight was a mid-19th century architect of some note. A pupil of George Snell, he later designed a number of Boston and New England theatres, halls, warehouses, commercial buildings, and residences. Along with neighboring buildings at 90-92 and 86-88 Bedford and 39-41 Kingston Streets, this building was erected after the widening of the Bedford/Kingston intersections, precipitated by a fire on Thanksgiving Day in 1889. The brick and brownstone (now painted) Panel Brick design is significant as one in a row of nine post-fire commercial buildings. The early occupants of 43-45 Kingston Street were probably engaged in dry goods/clothing-related activities. This building is located within the suggested Church Green National Register District. The party wall between this building and 39-41 Kingston Street may be a remnant of an earlier building on the site.

42-48, 56-58 and 60-62 Franklin Street and	Non-Contributing at Present
42-48 Hawley Street	Potentially Significant
First Federal Savings	
c. 1873-1875, modernized 1957	
Architects unknown	

In 1957, three post-fire masonry buildings here were covered over in plastic panels, mainly in turquoise. It is possible that the original facades are still retrievable. If so, reversing the changes would make a substantial contribution to the streetscape. Early tenants here included three commission dry goods dealers, a woolen jobber, and a toys and fancy goods dealer. This property is located within the suggested Commercial Palace National Register District.

64-70 Franklin Street

Significant

1873-1874

Bradlee & Winslow, architects

In the early 19th century this area was residential. Brick townhouses occupied the north side of Franklin Street, and the south side had Bulfinch's Tontine Crescent townhouses. In the 1850s buildings were razed for commercial development. Today, Franklin Street has a post-fire character since the blaze of 1872 destroyed its mid-19th century buildings.

Number 64-70 Franklin Street is an Italianate building, handsome with a granite facade, and integral to its setting. Nathaniel J. Bradlee and Walter T. Winslow were popular, prolific Boston architects. See 89-93 Franklin Street, the Wigglesworth Building, for information on the architects and their downtown works. Originally this building was occupied by two commission dry goods firms. It is located within the suggested Commercial Palace National Register District.

72-74 Franklin Street

Significant

Corner of Arch Street

1874-1875

Cummings & Sears, architects

James Smith & Charles Knight, builders

Cummings & Sears designed two outstanding post-fire "commercial palaces", this one and the Bedford Building at 89-103 Bedford Street. Proving their versatility, they worked in the High Victorian Gothic style for the Bedford Building, and employed an unusual combination of Renaissance Revival and Neo-Grec styling on this one. Such rich granite buildings as 72-74 Franklin Street show the optimism which flavored the post-fire rebuilding of the downtown. With a corner location, this building is integral to the character of the area today and it sports an attractive early storefront on Bailey's ice cream shop.

Trustees of the J. Sears estate had this structure erected. Originally the entire building was occupied by Simons, Hatch & Whitten, jobbers of men's furnishing goods. For information on the architects, see 89-103 Bedford Street. Further study is recommended to determine whether 72-74 Franklin Street meets the criteria needed for designation as a Boston City Landmark. It is part of the suggested Commercial Palace National Register District.

33-39 Franklin Street and

Notable

63 Hawley Street

Filene's (rear section)

1905

Peters and Rice, architect

L.D. Willont and Son, builder

The estate of George P. Upham erected this building to house Jones, McDuffee and Stratton Company, china and gift ware. Established in 1810 and formerly located on Federal Street, the company occupied all ten floors of this building. Filene's department store expanded into 33-39 Franklin Street in the 1920s or 1930s.

Architecturally, this is a bold and cleanly-designed pier and spandrel building. Executed in brick, it has a classically-detailed granite storefront, and metal sash. Architects William C. Peters and Arthur Wallace Rice practiced together from 1896 to around 1906. Then Rice joined with J. Harlston Parker and Douglas H. Thomas. This is the only building remaining in the downtown known to have been designed by Peters and Rice. Better-known Parker, Thomas and Rice designed many commercial Boston buildings including R.H. Stearns (see 138-140 Tremont Street), the William Laurence Building at 83-87 Devonshire, the Minor Building at 103-111 Devonshire, and the State Street Trust Company at 10 Congress.

This building is now a rear cornerstone of the Filene's block-sized complex.

41-47 Franklin Street and

Significant

76-82 Hawley Street

Suffolk-Franklin Savings

1873-1874

Attributed to Bryant & Rogers, architects

The restrained Neo-Grec forms of this building reflect the culmination of the Boston Granite style after the fire of 1872. The front is granite and the side facade is red brick. The attribution of the design to Bryant & Rogers is based on a building permit for No. 65-71 Franklin. At the corner of Arch Street, that is one in a row of five buildings of the same design which spanned this block. Edward A. White (et al) was the owner of this building and its mirror corner image at 65-71 Franklin Street. Information on the leading Boston architect of his day, Gridley J.F. Bryant, and his partner, Louis Rogers, is given for 322-338 Washington Street, the Transcript Building.

Originally of cast iron, the storefront was remodeled in 1946 and redone in its present form in 1966. The current design, by the firm of Bastille-Neiley, is a careful work with design elements inspired by the upper stories. The cornice replacement is not as comfortable. This post-fire building is integral to the character of the area, especially with its complement at 65-71 Franklin Street. Early tenants included two bookstores, a bookbinder, and L. Prang & Co. Bulfinch's celebrated Tontine Crescent housing stood here in the early 19th century. It was razed in the 1850s for the first wave of commercial development on Franklin Street. This building is part of the suggested Commercial Palace National Register District.

49-51 Franklin Street

Minor

Oratory of St. Thomas More

1935-1936, alterations

Richard Shaw, architect (1935-1936)

The Archdiocese of Boston acquired this building in 1934. This Moderne facade and interior renovation work was done by the Archdiocese for use of the building to house a chapel, church offices, and the Pilot newspaper. In the early 19th century this site held part of Bulfinch's Tontine Crescent rowhousing. It was redeveloped for commercial use in the 1850s and again after the fire of 1872. The present cast stone facade and its companion at 53-55 Franklin interrupt the post-fire character of the area. However, the chapel is notable for its largely preserved Moderne interior. The building is located within the suggested Commercial Palace National Register District.

53-55 Franklin Street

Minor

c. 1963

Architect unknown

After acquiring this property in 1962, the Archdiocese of Boston erected a building designed as a companion to adjacent 49-51 Franklin Street. It replaced a pier and spandrel commercial building which was the first to break the unity of this post-fire blockface. With a cast stone facade that is a 1960s version of its Moderne companion, 53-55 Franklin makes a contribution to the character of the area in scale, but not in style. Bulfinch's Tontine Crescent residences stood here from the early 1800s to the 1850s. That building was razed for the commercial redevelopment of the area. The present structure is located within the suggested Commercial Palace National Register District.

57-63 Franklin Street

Significant

1873-1874

Attributed to Bryant & Rogers, architects

A solid row of five post-fire granite buildings spanned this blockface. Now three remain, here and at the two corners. The group has been attributed to Bryant & Rogers, based on a building permit for 65-71 Franklin and the similarity of the design across the row. Simplicity is the key, combining Neo-Grec elements with the established straightforward Boston Granite style.

Originally this building was erected by the President and Fellows of Harvard College as investment property. Early tenants were jobbers, commission dealers, and storage for the dry goods industry. Information on the leading Boston architect of his day, Gridley J.F. Bryant, and his partner Louis Rogers, is given for 322-328 Washington Street, the Transcript Building.

This building is well-preserved except for storefront modernization. As a grouping and as fine post-fire commercial buildings, 41-47, 57-63, and 65-71 Franklin Street are quite important. Originally, this was the site of Bulfinch's Tontine Crescent rowhouses. In the 1850s, that building was razed for commercial development. The present structure is part of the suggested Commercial Palace National Register District.

65-71 Franklin Street and

Significant

83-85 Arch Street

1873-1874

Bryant & Rogers, architects

John W. Leighton, builder

Like bookends, 65-71 and 41-47 Franklin Street frame the blockface. They are mirror image buildings left along with 57-63 Franklin Street from a continuous row of five post-fire commercial structures. The entire row has been attributed to architects Bryant and Rogers on the basis of a building permit found for this anchor building. Edward A. White (et al) owned both corner buildings, originally.

The extant buildings are a restrained and dignified combination of the Neo-Grec and Boston granite styles. They are significant together in retaining the post-fire character of Franklin Street. In 1877, the tenants were three jobbers, all related to the dry goods/clothing industry. Information on the leading Boston architect of his day, Gridley J.F. Bryant, and his partner, Louis Rogers, is given for 322-328 Washington Street, the Transcript Building. Originally, this site held the Tontine Crescent rowhouses by Charles Bulfinch. They were replaced in the 1850s by commercial buildings. The present building is part of the suggested Commercial Palace National Register District.

77-83 Franklin Street and

Significant

80-88 Arch Street

Columbian National Life Insurance Co.

1912

Parker, Thomas & Rice, architects

George W. Harvey Co., builder

Except for an almost triangular form to fit its corner site, this is a representative eclectic early 20th century Boston skyscraper. It is notable for the Renaissance Revival styling, finely-crafted in limestone. Located at the junction of the retail and financial areas, this building is integral to the fabric of the streetscapes. It is part of the suggested Commercial Palace National Register District.

The Columbian National Life Insurance Co. erected this building and occupied it into the 1960s. Then it housed the Hartford Life Insurance Co. Architects Parker, Thomas & Rice produced many familiar commercial buildings in Boston. A leading firm, they were most at home with Neo-Classical styles but worked in a varied vocabulary. See 139-140 Tremont Street, R.H. Stearns, for further information on the partners and their works.

85-87 Franklin Street through to
217 Devonshire Street
c. 1873-1875

Significant

Architect unknown, not Fred Pope

It comes as no surprise that this post-fire mercantile building was originally associated with the city's dry goods industry as the Summer Street/Winthrop Square area was a center for this important 19th century trade.

No. 85-87 Franklin Street is notable for its polychrome brick and sandstone facade. The incised line decoration is Neo-Grec in style. The building is an integral element in the character of the area. On Devonshire, the rear facade is part of the frame for the Winthrop Square park. This building is part of the suggested Commercial Palace National Register District.

86-102 Franklin Street,

Major Significance

56-60 Arch Street and

199-201 Devonshire Street

New England Merchants National Bank/Boston

Safe Deposit and Trust Company

1908-1911

Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge, architects

Norcross Brothers Co., builder

In gleaming white marble, with a graceful curve along Franklin and restrained classical design, this is a real eye-catcher. The prominent site is near a solid grouping of post-fire "commercial palaces" on Franklin as well as the Art Deco State Street Bank & Trust Co. Building. Alone or in context this is a very important building.

Originally this bulge on Franklin reflected the plan of Bulfinch's Tontine Crescent townhouses across the street. After the fire of 1872, this area housed retail and wholesale textile and clothing activities in Victorian mercantile buildings whose stone fronts and handsome designs earned them the title of "commercial palaces".

The present building represents the early 20th century development of the Financial District, in exemplary design and pristine condition. Architects George Foster Shepley (1860-1903), Charles H. Rutan (1851-1914), and Charles A. Coolidge (1858-1936) were all employed in the Boston office of H.H. Richardson. Upon his death in 1886 they became successors to the practice, finishing designs Richardson had begun, and continuing on with their own very successful

efforts. Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge's works include the earliest buildings at Stanford University plus Chicago's Art Institute and Public Library (now the Cultural Center). Distinguished Boston buildings by the firm are One Court Street (the Ames Building), the Chamber of Commerce, and the South Station headhouse.

Norcross Brothers was Richardson's preferred builder, known for technical excellence and fine craftsmanship. The Plateau marble for 86-102 Franklin Street came from the quarries of Norcross-West Marble Co., Dorset, Vermont. Boston Safe Deposit Co. was established in 1875; they remained at this address at least through the 1960s.

89-93 Franklin Street and

Major Significance

211-215 Devonshire Street

Wigglesworth Building

1873

Bradlee & Winslow, architects

Three exuberant Panel Brick style buildings mark edges of the "burnt district".

They lead to the heart of the "commercial palace" area, rebuilt after the Fire of 1872 with richly-detailed masonry mercantile buildings of 4 to 6 stories.

The other two are 26-38 Summer Street (formerly Kennedy's) near the Washington Street spine, and 137-139 Summer Street, adjacent to the South Station area.

This one, the Wigglesworth Building (named for property owner Edward Wigglesworth), points its angled corner form at Devonshire Street and the Financial District. Its wrap-around facade is rhythmically banded with red brick and light gray stone of granite and limestone, accentuating rows of windows.

From 1876 to 1900, this was the home of Abram French & Co., crockery, glass and gift ware. The first floor boasted a display of the finest decorated goods available in New England. The basement and upper floors were devoted to wholesale business which shipped to all parts of the U.S. and to Canada. The company was founded in 1822 by Andrew T. Hall, becoming French, Wells & Co., then Abram French & Co.

Architect Nathaniel J. Bradlee (1829-1888) began his training at age seventeen in the office of George Minot Dexter. He remained there for more than a decade and succeeded to Dexter's practice. In subsequent years he was said to have designed some 500 commercial buildings in Boston. Many were destroyed by the Fire of 1872. Walter T. Winslow was taken on as a junior partner. Winslow & George Wetherell succeeded to Bradlee's practice upon his death in 1888. Examples of Bradlee's work remain at 29-35 and 37-43 Temple Place and 40 Winter Street. Bradlee & Winslow designed six buildings still standing in downtown Boston, including 391-405 Washington, 19-23 Milk, 330 Washington, 119-123 Water, and 64-70 Franklin Streets. This fine example of Victorian commercial architecture is recommended for designation as a Boston City Landmark. It is part of the suggested Commercial Palace National Register District.

1-5 Winthrop Square

Major Significance

261-287 Devonshire Street and

18-36 Otis Street

One Winthrop Square/Record-American/Beebe-Weld Building

1873-1874

Emerson & Fehmer, architects

Around a crook in Devonshire Street, this "commercial palace" appears suddenly and refreshingly. Freestanding on three sides, its monumentality is enhanced by a mini-park apron of recent vintage but equally formal design. The granite facades (with some brick bays on Devonshire Street) are well-detailed in the French Second Empire style. The decoration also anticipates the flatter Neo-Grec mode.

Initials "W" and "B" in the central pediment stand for property owner, William F. Weld and James M. Beebe. The building replaces the 1860 French Second Empire Beebe's Block designed by Gridley Bryant. Beebe was a dry goods merchant. Weld, a shipping merchant, owned downtown properties as well.

At the time of the Great Fire of 1872 (which destroyed the 1860 building) and for sometime afterwards, Winthrop Square was in the center of dry goods and clothing trade. Originally tenants of the Beebe-Weld Building included wholesale dry goods, ready-made clothing manufacturers, dry goods jobbers, commission dry goods, corset manufacturers, and dry goods sample rooms. From 1924 to 1972, the building was occupied by the Boston Record-American. In 1972 this paper merged with the Herald.

The architects, William Ralph Emerson (1833-1918) and Carl Fehmer (b.1835) were in the early stages of their distinguished careers when they designed this work. Their only other downtown collaboration are attributed: 62-64, 66-72, and 83-87 Summer Street. Emerson became a noted Shingle Style residential architect. German-born and educated, Fehmer may have learned about the Neo-Grec style in Europe.

In 1975, renovation for retail and office space was completed at a cost of \$5 million. The careful work was directed by architects Childs, Bertman & Tseckeres for the Winthrop Square Conservation Trust. The very popular front park was created at the same time from a traffic island. This building has been recommended for designation as a Boston City Landmark. It is part of the suggested Church Green National Register District.

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